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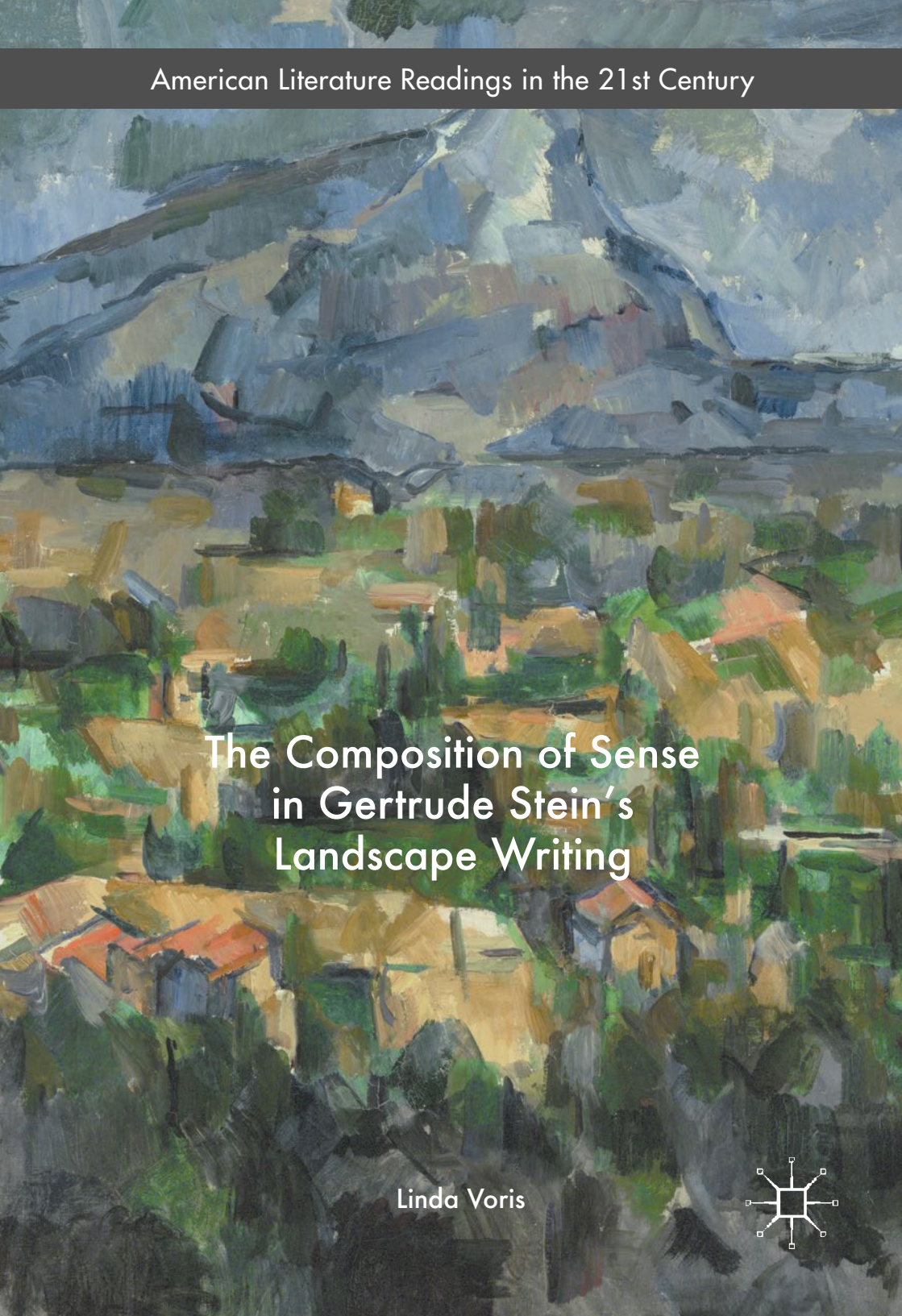

The Composition of Sense in Gertrude Stein's Landscape Writing

Linda Voris

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The Composition of Sense in Gertrude Stein's Landscape Writing

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for Despina

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to painting, has been a daunting and inspiring example. Long after we ceased working together on Stein, I know that my habit of posing questions in relation to Cézanne stems from Charlie's adroit understanding of his painting.

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Portrait of Picasso," published in *Studies in American Fiction*, The Johns Hopkins Press, 39.2 (Fall 2012): 175–205. Chapter 4 draws on material published in "Reading the Background in Gertrude Stein," in *Primary Stein*, eds. Janet Boyd and Sharon J. Kirsch (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Rowman and Littlefield, 2014). I am grateful for permission to reprint this material.

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List of Abbreviations

Primary Texts

ABT	*The Autobiography Of Alice B. Toklas*
AFAM	*As Fine As Melanctha (1914–1930)*
BTV	*Bee Time Vine And Other Pieces (1913–1927)*
G&P	*Geography And Plays*
LIA	*Lectures In America*
LO&P	*Last Operas And Plays*
N	*Narration*
O&P	*Operas And Plays*
P	*Picasso*
PL	*Painted Lace And Other Pieces (1914–1937)*
P&P	*Portraits And Prayers*
SR	*A Stein Reader*
TB	*Tender Buttons*
UK	*Useful Knowledge*

INTRODUCTION

The Force of Landscape

On an extended stay in Provence in 1922, Gertrude Stein proposed a disarming homology that was to prove a breakthrough in the course of her experimental writing. Could a play be modeled on the formation of landscape instead of story?[1] Conventional theater makes a person feel "nervous" she explained in her 1935 lecture "Plays," because of the lack of congruence between a viewer's emotion and the unfolding of the play (LIA 245). The curtain is the first clue that there will be a discrepancy, and as she so often did, Stein theorized the problem in temporal terms. The problem with plays, she claimed, is "the problem of time in relation to emotion" because the "emotional time" of the viewer is not aligned with the action of the play: "Your sensation as one in the audience in relation to the play played before you your sensation I say your emotion concerning that play is always either behind or ahead of the play at which you are looking and to which you are listening" (LIA 251, 244). In the spatial organization of landscape relations, Stein saw the opportunity to substitute the equivalence and simultaneity of composition for the chronological time of narrative. She reasoned that "if the play was exactly like a landscape," spatial relations would replace dramatic development, and the viewer's emotion would coincide with the play much as a viewer appears to be co-present with landscape that is *simply there* (LIA 263).

Stein's insight that she might resolve a temporal problem by means of a spatial method proved enormously generative in the early 1920s, so much

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so that, in an excited burst of composition, she reprised not only playwriting but also portraiture with her new method. In a retrospective account, Stein described the winter she stayed on in St.-Rémy in the Provence region, working "with slow care and concentration," as an important turning point and a period of her writing that would prove a significant influence for other writers.[2] Even a cursory survey of her work during the early 1920s reveals that Stein's method changed dramatically when she modeled composition on a spatial homology. Clearly, she had a new formal experiment in hand, one she sustained on her return to Paris, and the writing of this period is characterized by lightness and exhilaration. Several of Stein's most anthologized pieces date to these years including her second portrait of Picasso, "If I Told Him A Completed Portrait Of Picasso" (1923), a portrait of Cézanne (1923), and the opera libretto, *Four Saints In Three Acts* (1927). Contemporary experimental playwrights and directors acknowledge Stein's plays as an important influence on their work, and American experimental theater groups including the Living Theater, the Judson Poets' Theater, and the Wooster Group, have staged her plays and adaptations of her plays.[3]

Yet much of Stein's writing of the early 1920s has received little critical attention and continues to present challenges to readers and critics. To my knowledge, Stein's first landscape play, *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions* (1922), a remarkably successful example of her new method, has never been produced. By focusing on Stein's work in the early 1920s, I want to do something more than fill a gap in the critical record however. Although these are lively and groundbreaking texts, readers may concur with the persistent conclusion concerning Stein's work that they, like others in her *oeuvre*, make no sense. Or, if they do make sense, they do so according to a system that remains hermetic and closed. In my view, these conclusions stem from neglecting what is radical in Stein's approach to meaning and my ambition in this book is to trace her innovations in landscape writing in order to determine what constitutes meaning when making sense is understood as compositional rather than representational.

I present my analysis of this highly accomplished period of Stein's writing as a case study modeling a new critical approach to her work. While critics have made bold claims for Stein's transgressive modernism, no one has yet proposed that we change our critical approach from interpretation based on rationalist tenets to one that corresponds to her radical epistemology and follows her experiments even when these carry us far beyond familiar expectations. Although it is well established that Stein's experi-

ments with language use contest a representational theory of knowledge, in critical practice we nonetheless reaffirm its grammars and logic. In close readings, I demonstrate how we might change our critical method, in both expectations and practice, if we instead adopt Stein's epistemology and her method of making sense. The landscape writing of the early 1920s is an ideal period to demonstrate a compositional approach for three reasons: in these prolific years she produces some of her most anthologized texts, including a broadside against conventional explanation; her style changes dramatically with the introduction of a new compositional problem; and the work of these years is self-reflexive, insofar as the experiment with landscape writing becomes a visual and spatial homology for Stein's compositional method. By limiting my study to texts written in succession and over a brief period of time, I can identify developments in a sustained compositional problem as Stein tries first one strategy and then another using the landscape homology. In so doing, I reveal the complexity of her compositional method whereby insights garnered in one text carry over with variation to the next, and demonstrate that texts that have long been neglected as intervening or minor pieces are in fact important members in a sustained experiment that ripples with the excitement of discovery.

This period of Stein's writing is notable not only because of her considerable accomplishments, but because she came to a startling finding concerning knowledge and representation through her experiments with landscape. As I propose, a detailed study of her work of these years reveals a developing series of experiments with the landscape homology over the course of which Stein explores differing spatial models and their implications for time sense and ultimately recasts her notion of knowledge on a spatial model. These compositional experiments with the landscape homology reprise philosophical concerns long important to her and enact a radical epistemology, a mode of understanding the interrelatedness of meaning, experience, and language practice. Stein was well aware of the stakes and implications of this compositional experiment. We find a self-reflexive analysis of explanation in "An Elucidation" (1923), a hilarious and curiously elusive text interspersed in the sequence of her landscape writing and informed by her new approach to knowledge and meaning. Understanding what constitutes explanation for Stein can be helpful for readers who protest that her texts "don't make sense" and for critics who want a method of proceeding. As I contend, the texts are actively making sense once we understand her unique epistemology, and, taking Stein at her word, we may treat "composition as explanation" as the basis of a new

critical approach, one that allows us to identify the stakes of a compositional experiment without imposing rationalist principles.[4]

Perhaps the failure to recognize this new epistemology and its implications for Stein's compositional tasks during these years helps account for what I would characterize as the persistent timidity of critical practice in the face of Stein's radical modernism. The difficulties her work presents to criticism are well acknowledged; more than one study begins by outlining its critical approach and proposes "how to read Stein." Of course, I am not the only Stein critic to suggest that we become self-aware of the constitutive effects of our interpretive stance and strategies. In her essay, "'A Fine New Kind of Realism': Six Styles in Search of a Reader," Marjorie Perloff was among the first to suggest that readers might need to adapt their reading strategies to Stein's writing methods.[5] And, in a brilliant reading of Stein's method in "Lifting Belly," Peter Quartermain claims that "the poem assaults the standard interpretive notion of meaning as an 'essence' that must be extracted just as it assaults the standard interpretive practice of peeling away 'layers' of signification through abstracting and then explicating 'key' words and phrases which will 'unlock' the text."[6] The obstacles to interpretation are considerable, not only because individual texts can seem hermetic but also because Stein's work changes radically over time as she addresses different compositional tasks and therefore successive texts can challenge our understanding of what it means to understand in new ways.

Stein appears to have left a minefield for critics: How are we to proceed without offering explanations of texts that she maintained required no explanation, and without practicing rationalist processes of explanation such as selection and substitution that her work so obviously subverts? How are we to interpret Stein's experiment in portraiture, for example, without reinstating the conventions of representation her verbal portraits contest and without resorting to the rationalism underlying such representation? Anyone seriously reading Stein discovers that her innovations preempt both critical practice and the very grounds for the practice. However non-representational or non-mimetic her work is considered, however radical a modernist she is acknowledged to be, criticism of Stein most often proceeds as if it were possible to state conclusions concerning her work in the conventions of literary criticism, that is, as the product of analysis, as the result of interpretation based on rationalist premises.

By contrast, "Composition As Explanation," the title of the lecture that Stein gave at Oxford and at Cambridge University following on this period

of writing in 1926, renders composition and explanation equivalent terms and suggests that composition will serve as explanation. As Ulla Dydo among others has observed, this suggests that "Writing is its own elucidation" and we do not need to add explanation to Stein's texts.[7] As I contend, we need instead to find the explanation at work in the compositional method. This is more easily said than done. Faced with the difficulty of Stein's writing which can at times seem hermetic, one understands the impulse on the part of critics to gain some sort of extra-textual leverage, a key, or context, or as Dydo writes, "clues to its making."[8] In her critical study, *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises 1923-1934*, Dydo adopts a compositional stance, and yet, drawing on extensive research in the manuscripts, including the tiny *carnets* that Stein did not want preserved, she consistently interprets Stein's texts in reference to biographical material.[9] Despite acknowledging Stein's resistance to reference ("As she said over and over, she wrote literature, not references"),[10] Dydo claims that referential details will disclose Stein's writing method: "Reading the referential details makes it possible to follow, in a raw state, what was happening to Stein, what she did and what she thought."[11] The source material will reveal the writing process or "where composition came from and how she made it."[12] In my view, the details of daily life do not disclose "what she thought" so readily, nor does reference unlock Stein's compositional method. As Stein herself cautioned in *The Making Of Americans*, "It is never facts that tell, they are the same when they mean very different things."[13]

Introducing the personal references that Stein took pains to remove cannot help but impose conventional operations of reference and representation, and thereby block readers' ability to track what happens to elements in composition. Notes in the manuscripts that Dydo regards as "clues to its making" will not disclose the compositional method if this is procedural and involves other elements that comprise the compositional totality. To analyze what becomes of an element as it enters into composition requires that we set aside expectations of conventional reference and instead study how the element accrues and changes meaning in composition. However, in her study, Dydo tends not to read across individual texts to discover how words or phrases enter into one or more series that form the composition. She instead reads words locally, determining meaning in short passages through extra-textual reference to biographical context, without also tracing the recurrence of elements and their variation in the composition overall.

And so the challenge for critics remains. Once we understand Stein's critique of conventional explanation and her alternative, a model of compositional equivalence, her work undermines the very basis of literary interpretation. As Stein herself recognized, her writing seems to leave critics with little to do aside from to admire and to enjoy. Asked how she would explain her work in a radio interview on her 1934–35 lecture tour in the U.S., Stein challenged her interviewer's assumptions about explanation and understanding: "Don't you see what I mean? If you enjoy it [her writing] you understand it, and lots of people have enjoyed it so lots of people have understood it."[14] But if enjoyment is understanding, what is our critical practice?

The difference between meaning and experience is the gist of a recent divide in Steinian criticism. Arguing that Stein has mistakenly been adopted as a "post-modernist precursor," Jennifer Ashton objects that this critical misappropriation ignores her modernism which entails a commitment to the autonomy of the text and the "irrelevance of the reader."[15] Ashton cautions that critics who emphasize the "materiality" of Stein's texts substitute the reader's experience for meaning and she objects to the "literalism" of Marjorie Perloff's approach in her critical study, *21st-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics*.[16] For her part, Perloff claims that upholding the modernist/post-modernist distinction now seems a "tired dichotomy" and her ambition is not to render Stein post-modernist but to identify "a second wave of modernism" in the work of a contemporary avant-garde that she claims adopts the "anti-symbolist mode of indeterminacy" of modernists such as Stein.[17] The contemporary "new" poetics then is not entirely new insofar as it involves a reprisal of the "materialist poetic" that Perloff finds in Stein's non-representational texts among others.[18] Perloff describes the materiality of the text (the tendency toward intratextual elaboration as distinguished from transparency) as the "'undecidability,' of literalness and free play."[19] She joins many of the Language poets when she claims that the resulting indeterminacy of the text invites readers to participate in the construction of meaning.[20] According to Perloff, Stein anticipates the constructivism of later poets who would understand that "language, far from being a *vehicle* or conduit for thoughts and feelings outside and prior to it, is itself the site of meaning-making."[21] But for Ashton, a focus on the "material form" of Stein's texts is not reading but experience insofar as it entails treating the text as an object, and an object cannot mean it can only *be* and be experienced. The meaning of the text will be what readers make of it, and the reader's experience will replace interpretation.[22]

Oddly, although Ashton insists on interpreting the "meaning" of the text, she does not see the need to explain how she defines meaning. Evidently, the author's intention is the primary determination for Ashton who cautions that indeterminacy undermines intention: "Once meaning is imagined as a function of the experiential effects of a poem, it cannot be a function of intention."[23] Only in the closing pages of her discussion when she dismisses "experiential meaning" does it become evident that by meaning Ashton has meant "semantic meaning" all along.[24] But even if we do not regard the difficulty of Stein's work (in Perloff's phrase) as a "poetics of indeterminacy," no one would claim that semantic meaning is readily evident in her experimental texts, and Ashton offers little in the way of guidelines for deciding such meaning. After all, critics such as Perloff, Lyn Hejinian, and Peter Quartermain who analyze the "material form" of Stein's work are responding to the non-transparency in her language use, its tendency to "fore[ground] linguistic (as opposed to referential or representational) concerns."[25] As I hope to show, in her writing practices and in her inquiry concerning knowledge, Stein baffles rationalist efforts to neatly divide meaning and experience, sense and thing. In composition, she practices a form of making sense as an expression that undermines conventional denotation and signification.

Nonetheless, the impasse between the approach of Ashton and Perloff is telling: it reveals that the tendency to reassert rationalist premises in Steinian criticism is perennial, and that we need a critical method that identifies epistemology as a compositional question. Because Stein made a lifelong study of knowledge and its relation to composition, what counts as meaning or making sense is precisely what is at issue, and we need not proceed as if there were no philosophical alternatives to rationalism and the logic of predication. To accept Ashton's analysis of the critical field would put us at a curious juncture in Stein studies that no doubt we will want to avoid: either with Ashton we look to the author's intention for meaning, or with Perloff (according to Ashton) we constitute our own meanings. But are these really our choices for meaning—is meaning to be restricted to intention, Stein's or the reader's? I am proposing that the text is making meaning with and without Stein's intention or that of its readers. Where Ashton insists that "to understand what [the text] means" is opposed to "causing an effect" on readers (interpretation cannot be experience) she neglects that the text is making effects of a different kind, and here I agree with Perloff and Hejinian that the texts proceed on the basis of composition rather than representation.[26] The Steinian text creates

effects as words and series have effects on other words and other series, thereby forming a composition. Its meaning depends upon the articulation or unfolding of a compositional problem as an aggregate of these effects and therefore meaning is not entirely indeterminate, but neither is it strictly the product of interpretation of semantic meaning. Meaning is a compositional expression, an engagement that involves properties of both language use and composition; it is constructed and dynamic on a pluralist model of reality consistent with William James's claim that "What really *exists* is not things made but things in the making."[27]

Texts written in succession are linked by recurrent phrases revealing a sustained compositional task that crosses the boundaries of individual texts and genres. Reading in sequence, we discover how often Stein continues the experiment simply by reversing the structure of the preceding text. Critics have long recognized that any year of Stein's writing includes an assortment of genres, and that texts distinguished by genre may share the style of that year or period. Our ability to identify compositional tasks and to use these as the basis of critical reading has been obscured by the publication of Stein's work in anthologies which, of course, present selections and omit intervening texts, and by criticism that groups together texts of disparate periods according to genre expectations, thematic or biographical interests. Although Steven Meyer observes that "[Stein] always focused on specific compositional features as constraints for the experiments in question,"[28] only Dydo has attempted the time-consuming practice of analyzing the texts of a given period in compositional sequence. While she observes that certain words and phrases recur such that "[o]ne text connects with another and spreads reading across more than one piece of this time," Dydo does not recognize that Stein sustains a compositional task, but instead seeks to identify the biographical context that informs successive texts.[29]

I am proposing that we might treat "composition as explanation" by looking to the text to discover the problems or questions constituted by its unique formal strategies and word choices. And, if composition functions as explanation, then, in a seeming tautology that cannot be avoided, what the text is making sense of is a compositional problem. What we are tracking as we read is a discovery that proceeds in the writing, through Stein's shaping of and engagement with the compositional task as it unfolds; the expression of this discovery is the event of the text, and to explain for it is to explain it away. In a nutshell, this is the methodological principle of my book: I engage the composition of each text as a mode of explanation.

The work of the early 1920s is particularly appealing because here we know for certain that Stein introduces a dramatically new compositional task and therefore I can demonstrate my critical method by outlining her strategies as she constitutes the experiment with the landscape homology in successive texts. This will include close readings of several texts that have not been critically read, grouped in the sequence of their composition. I follow a compositional approach, identifying the particular compositional task at hand, tracing its formal strategies, demonstrating how the text builds compositional totality, and tracking the experiment across related texts for its implications to the overall compositional problem.

In the early 1920s, the compositional question is "the problem of time in relation to emotion" (LIA 251). The landscape homology is the compositional strategy or solution that Stein developed to address this problem. We know this not because she summarized it in a lecture written after the fact but because we can trace this compositional problem over the course of Stein's successive experiments with temporal and spatial properties in love poems and the landscape plays. I illustrate how we might practice "composition as explanation," by reading Stein's landscape plays in the sequence of composition as members of a sustained compositional experiment rather than by means of comparison to genre expectations. Pronounced differences in method among these plays that would otherwise be baffling can be understood, I argue, as successive developments in her ongoing experiment with the landscape homology. I focus on the years 1921, 1922, and 1923, when stays in Vence, the Provence region, and the Riviera prompted Stein to model her writing method on landscape. These were productive years and her work encompasses several genres in texts of differing styles. Yet, as I contend, several formal features link these disparate texts in the landscape experiment including the recurrence of certain words such as *places*, *arrangement*, *preparation*, and phrases including "In this way/In that way" and "in place." The reiteration of these taglines with variation reveals that the texts participate in a shared compositional experiment. Of the many instances of the word *place* in texts of these years we read, for example, in *Saints And Singing* (1922) of the "wish that Paul, Constance and religion have their place." Variants of the idiom "in the first place" appear throughout the play *Capital Capitals* (1923), and there is a suggestion of "places" at the dinner table in *A List* (1923). The familiar household credo, "A place for everything and everything in its place," emerges in "An Elucidation" (1923) with much variation, and again in *Jonas Julian Caesar And Samuel* (1923).[30] These texts are also

connected in series through an emphasis on spatial relations, and recurrent questions concerning how things are joined or attached. *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions*, for example, opens with spatial directives and describes elements and activities that may be *attached*, *prepared*, *added*, and *folded*.[31] "Lily Life," a short poem ends by enjoining, "Join water with wells. Join respect with regret" (PL 133). We can understand the developing compositional task and its implications when we read the landscape plays in series with these intervening texts.

The landscape plays Stein wrote in St.-Rémy are in fact starkly different in style from the voice plays of the teens and the plays she wrote in the immediately preceding years. During her stay in the fall of 1922 through the early spring of the following year, she wrote the landscape plays *Saints And Singing. A Play*, *A Saint In Seven*, *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions*, *A List*, and *Capital Capitals.* She may have begun *A Village. Are You Ready Yet Not Yet. A Play in Four Acts* in St.-Rémy and completed it in Paris on her return mid-March where, later that summer, she also wrote the plays *Jonas Julian Caesar And Samuel* and *Am I To Go Or I'll Say So*.[32] Most of these plays were included in the volume *Operas And Plays* released in 1932 by Plain Edition, Stein and Toklas's publishing venue.[33] Stein identifies *Lend A Hand* as "the first conception of landscape as a play" and I have followed suit, although earlier plays including *Saints And Singing* and *A Saint In Seven* suggest that landscape was already a model for composition (ABT 209).

Critics frequently associate the experiment with landscape with plays Stein wrote in subsequent years during annual stays in eastern France where she leased a summer home. In 1924, Stein and Toklas began spending the summer months in the Bugey, a region of the Rhône-Alps, first in the town of Belley and later in a house they leased in the hamlet, Bilignin. It is true that the landscape of this area is stupendous. Steep mountain ranges rise sharply over lush green valleys where sheep and cows graze in impossibly bucolic scenes. There, by her own account, Stein again found landscape inspiring, "The landscape at Bilignin so completely made a play that I wrote quantities of plays" (LIA 263). Indeed in her lecture "Plays," Stein asserts that she modeled all of her plays after her stay in St.-Rémy on landscape, and describes her best-known play *Four Saints In Three Acts* (1927) as a landscape play, "all these saints together made my landscape" (LIA 267).[34] The landscape of the Bugey region was an important compositional determinant (Dydo notes the many texts that concern description), but it was not the first time that landscape was decisive. This was

in St.-Rémy when, according to Dydo, Stein "contemplated the Rhône and the mountains from which it came" and when she first began writing landscape plays.[35] Therefore, I have restricted my discussion of the landscape plays to those she wrote in what Stein called her "Saint Remy period" since this is when her new style based on landscape emerges, and because these experiments directly precede and inform her new method of portraiture (LIA 306–7).[36] By reading these landscape plays in sequence with the intervening texts, I will demonstrate that the experiment she initiates with space and movement just before she resumes writing portraits bears directly on her new method of portraiture and that an understanding of the landscape experiment gives us critical entrance both to Stein's epistemology and to the portraits.

Stein's plays are notoriously difficult to classify; they remain an anomaly in literary histories written of the international avant-garde movements between 1910 and 1930. Where the "common denominator" is broadly drawn—"skepticism about earlier modes of perception"—Stein's plays can be included in such histories, although they bear more differences than similarities to Surrealist, Dadaist, and Futurist drama.[37] For example, in *American Avant-garde Theatre: A History,* Arnold Aronson draws parallels between the theater of Stein and Artaud despite the apparent differences because of the primacy both grant to spatial construction.[38] But while critics disagree as to whether Stein's plays are avant-garde or modernist, there is no doubt that her work has been a tremendous influence on contemporary directors and producers of experimental theater, music, and dance, including Judith Malina and Julian Beck in productions of the Living Theatre, Al Carmines and Lawrence Kornfeld of the Judson Poets' Theater, the Judson Dance Theater, the Wooster Group, Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, John Cage, Merce Cunningham among many others.[39]Although the plays reward study on their own merits, my topic is not Stein's innovation in playwriting but the critical practice we may adopt based on the ensuing discoveries. The landscape homology is an instance where we catch the introduction of a new experiment in Stein's work and, from this point, we can read forward and back in series to track the innovation that stems from her insight that she might exaggerate and dramatize the spatial dimension of a text.

I have three chief ambitions then: to present Stein's radical epistemology, to show how this epistemology developed, and to examine its implications for her new portrait method. In Chapter 1, I argue that "An Elucidation" is a self-reflexive analysis of explanation: what Stein elucidates

in the text is elucidation. Through a close reading I offer a theoretical analysis of the epistemological implications of her radical form of explanation. In a playful mobilizing of the "places" accorded examples, Stein disrupts the substitutive and hierarchical ordering of conventional explanation and fashions her alternative by thoroughly testing the language practices involved in explanation. Stein's explanation is a dynamic compositional event resulting from the capacities of language use to attribute and to express when these are not limited to a logic of predication. This model of knowledge requires space in which to unfold as multiple, reversible connections among several series cross and constitute the text. A curious time sense emerges, combining two contradictory formal aspects Stein discovered in her experiments with the landscape homology: landscape as duration or immanence, and landscape as flux, endlessly becoming. In order to interpret Stein's alternative to conventional explanation we must set aside rationalist expectations, and to this end, I discuss her method in the context of the radical empiricist thought of William James and Gilles Deleuze. Although it means departing from compositional sequence, I begin with interpretation of "An Elucidation" so that for the remainder of the book I can demonstrate how to use an understanding of Stein's epistemology as the basis of a critical approach.

Next, in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, I analyze texts of the preceding years to show that Stein's epistemology stems from her ongoing experiments with the landscape homology as these develop over successive texts addressing a shared compositional task. In Chapter 2, I detect the first inklings of the compositional problem Stein identified with plays, "the problem of time in relation to emotion," in the challenges she poses in two love poems, "A Sonatina Followed By Another" (1921) and "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You" (1922). We pick up the series with the reiteration of the word "place" in these love poems in which Stein examines the displacements entailed in representation and tries instead to express intimacy, even that of long history, with immediacy and directness. These are problems of time, and in the love poems we see Stein beginning to experiment, not yet with landscape but with a spreading surface of equivalent and multiple arrangements that anticipates its spatial formation.

Chapter 3 introduces Stein's first landscape play, *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions*, through comparison to *Tender Buttons* (1912–13), another breakthrough text occasioned by a project of renewed looking. We note that these are related and reversed experiments in their use of a painterly analogy: drawing on analogy to landscape painting, the landscape plays

reverse the figure–ground emphasis of *Tender Buttons* which is written on the basis of still life. At least conceptually, the landscape homology involves the gesture of framing a view and therefore reprises Stein's earlier experiment in *Tender Buttons* to "includ[e] looking" at the world despite her reservations that, in so doing, she runs the risk of readmitting the mimetic basis of representation (LIA 301). In a close reading of *Lend A Hand*, I analyze Stein's methods for evoking a palpable spatial dimension and a presentational force that replaces representation. For this play, the landscape homology Stein employs is scenic, a model of the co-presence of landscape and viewer. And yet, if we ask why later landscape plays are so different in style compared to the first, we must recognize that once she conceived of the homology, Stein immediately began experimenting with the compositional possibilities of framing associated with landscape, including a framed scenic mode, a flux without a frame, and other configurations of figure–ground relations. That is, once we realize that the landscape plays and intervening texts are linked, we can appreciate their differences as differences in a compositional experiment with landscape both in its physical sense as a view or prospect and as allusion to landscape painting. In Chapter 4, I trace this sustained experiment with framing devices by reading the landscape play *Capital Capitals* (1923) in sequence with a preceding text, "Why Are There Whites To Console. A History In Three Parts" (1922), and a later text, "Subject-Cases: The Background Of A Detective Story" (1923). We find Stein at work investigating the effects of first one configuration of figure–ground relations and then reversing its terms to configure yet another. Sequential experiments with framing devices and figure–ground relations result in dramatically differing temporal effects and impressions of movement in composition. These experiments in turn lead to Stein's excited discovery in the composition of "An Elucidation" that she might reconfigure explanation with the temporal properties she has explored in landscape writing so that explanation unfolds with a quality of immediacy, but because it requires compositional totality to transpire, explanation does not arrive or "take place."

In Chapter 5, I discuss the influence of the landscape homology and resulting epistemology on portraits of this period. During these years, Stein resumed writing portraits after a break and, as I contend, she did so with a markedly changed method based on the model of knowledge that resulted from her landscape writing. Reading in series, we can see that to write "second portraits" of her beloved, Alice Toklas, and of her longstanding friends, Carl Van Vechten and Picasso, is an extension of

the very compositional task Stein identified with the landscape plays, "the problem of time in relation to emotion." The playfulness and musicality of the portraits of this period may detract from the full force of the challenge these portraits pose to conventional notions of identity including the dissolution of the subject/object distinction, and the opening of the subject to pre-representational contingencies expressed in language. If we can resist reading the portraits for resemblance or likeness, reinstating conventional expectations of the subject, then perhaps, with Stein, we can see what we find, as the infinite possibilities available only in language use redraw the borders of inner and outer experience. Finally, in a reading of *A Book Concluding With As A Wife Has A Cow: A Love Story*, Stein's second portrait of Toklas, I demonstrate that by adopting a critical method that accords with her epistemology, we can interpret the implications of even her most radical innovations.

The Play as Landscape

Before offering a more detailed discussion as to why the landscape homology proved such an evocative prompt for Stein, I want to first dispel an association that may emerge in attempts to locate her innovation in historical accounts of drama. Critics have sought to link Stein's landscape homology to the classical metaphor of the *world as a stage for man*, but the play as landscape bears little similarity to *landscape as theater*. The later was, of course, a metaphor much elaborated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in keeping with developing humanist notions about the relationship between man and nature. To regard the world as a theater depended upon sixteenth-century developments in theater production and perspectivalism in painting. In Italy, these developments roughly coincided with the genesis of descriptive and historical geography, accounts that were also presented as theaters: the *Theater of Geography*, the *Theater of Cities*, the *Theater of the Garden*, and the *Theater of the World*.[40] Much like the doubling senses of *landscape*, the word *theater* was used in many senses to mean a fixed performance space and the performance itself, as well as the visual or spectacular aspect of an environment.[41] According to Denis Cosgrove, a cultural geographer, "Theater itself not only had the architectural meaning, derived from the ancients, of a playhouse and the performances shaped there, but also meant a conspectus: a place, region, or text in which phenomena are unified for public understanding."[42] This sense of theater as a circumscribed place or a text unifying discrete elements reso-

nates with Stein's landscape homology as a figure for containment and a relational field, as well as with *Geography And Plays*, the title she gave the book collection she completed before setting off for St.-Rémy.

But clearly Stein's homology, the play as landscape, does not share in the humanist ideals underlying landscape as theater, and in her playwriting she undermines conventions of the psychological, narrative-based theater that followed the theater of the spectacle. During the late seventeenth century, theater shifted from a focus on "the world as spectacle revealing divine order" to a more psychological drama based on the Aristotelian unities.[43] Where formerly the theater of the spectacle consisted in marvelous supernatural effects depicting vast landscapes or foreign palaces, in the new method the stage set was constricted to a small, bare stage typically depicting a single setting with a formalized backdrop. Aronson claims that the spatial structuring of Stein's landscape plays is a revolutionary alternative to Aristotelian plot-driven drama that frees the spectator from the "predetermined pace" of linear narrative and immerses the spectator in direct experience.[44]

If Stein's landscape plays can be meaningfully linked to the history of Italian theater, it is perhaps to the tradition of seventeenth-century popular theater which continued to relish the spectacular and which persisted despite the shift to serious, classical drama.[45] In their eerie evacuation or dispersal of human perspective, Stein's landscape plays bear some similarity to the popular form of spectacular theater, and the dioramas that followed, in which the centrality of the human subject was displaced by spectacular effects or vast, empty panoramic space. Ironically, in its popular form, the theater of the spectacular undid the "divine order" granting man center stage: mythical landscapes in opera and ballet or historical productions were so grandly and elaborately detailed in setting, stage, and costume that they completely eclipsed the individualism of protagonists or the significance of their actions. The diorama, first presented to Paris audiences in 1799, is the inevitable extension of this theater. John Brinckerhoff Jackson summarizes the impression on audiences: "A grandiose, circular panorama of New World scenery, accurate in every detail and without the disturbing presence of a single actor, it was an immediate success."[46] Popular first in Europe and later in the United States, late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century dioramas were special effects theaters in which the changing effects of light were displayed over large canvases. On view typically were landscape scenes, sometimes paired with an interior scene. According to Frances Terpak, "The strong effects of the

Diorama derived from the careful modulation of natural light onto and through the image to change the mood of the scene and the time of day represented."[47] However mimetic in their rendition of sunrise, sunset, or moonlight, the diorama and the panorama, an earlier innovation, were understood as spectacular representations, and audiences recognized and enjoyed the illusionism on display. Stein's landscape plays do not put landscape on view, but in something like the method of the diorama, she achieves landscape effects in her plays by exposing theatrical illusions *as illusions* and creates dramatic modulations in mood and scene that seem oddly removed from human consequences or implications.[48]

In what follows, I present the concepts that emerge in Stein's sustained experiment with landscape in a series of my own—landscape and looking, landscape and time, landscape and knowledge. I mean thereby to suggest that while criticism may require reading in sequence, these concepts unfold with simultaneity in Stein's work. Her experiment with landscape represents a convergence of these series, but we might trace other lines of experiment by following one of these series in another direction. As a result of Stein's compositional method, the concepts entailed, including landscape, composition, intimacy, and knowledge, become equivalent elements of an experiment, so that in a way that can be dizzying, we lose the confident distinctions we ordinarily draw among these and must discern these concepts anew in relation, as structural formations or activities.

Landscape and Looking

The landscape homology proved an exciting breakthrough for Stein because it was a new solution to a recurrent compositional problem. Readers familiar with Stein's work will recognize that "the problem of time in relation to emotion" she identifies in plays is not limited to playwriting, but is, in fact, a longstanding problem in her work. From her earliest portraiture in the teens, including her first portraits of Toklas and Picasso, Stein understood that the challenge in writing portraiture stemmed from the differences in time sense of perceptual experience and that of conventional representation. Let me briefly review the basis of Stein's objection to representational practices in portraiture so that the value and risks of drawing a visual analogy in the landscape period are clear.

In her early portraits, Stein decided that it was "including looking" that caused the problem in time sense since it admitted comparison and thereby the practice of memory. As she later explained, looking entailed identifying

resemblances and this resulted in mixing time senses: "The trouble with including looking . . . was that in regard to human beings looking inevitably carried in its train realizing movements and expression and as such forced me into recognizing resemblances, and so forced remembering and in forcing remembering caused confusion of present with past and future time" (LIA 301). Stein objected to the doubling practices of memory that are reproduced in representation. To notice resemblances involves comparison of one person to another or of one person at different times and therefore "presupposed remembering" and categorizing behavior or characteristics (LIA 293). Remembering creates confusion because it mixes time senses, a person remembering continually relates the present to a past experience, thereby "keeping two times going at once" (LIA 296). This doubling is reproduced in the mimetic practices of representation when portraiture is construed as a likeness of the subject. But while patterns of behavior may be repeated ("the scene in which one is acting, the days in which one is living, the coming and going which one is doing"), Stein maintained that the creative existing that occurs in the contingency of the present moment does not involve repetition (LIA 295).

The "trouble with including looking" therefore is not merely an objection to likeness based on comparison or resemblance that will inevitably be inexact as it reduces individuals to type and behavior to kind, but a theoretical objection that the repetition introduced by memory should be the basis of portraiture. As Stein explained, "the repetition consists in knowing that that one is a kind of a one, that the things he does have been done by others like him, but, and this is the important thing, there is no repetition in hearing and saying the things he hears and says when he is hearing and saying them" (LIA 295). Stein proposes that present moment existing stems from and accords with a subjectivity that is dynamic, a matter of intensity, rather than compound or aggregate. If, as she asserts, "the thing that is important is the intensity of anybody's existence," then the compositional time sense of the portrait should accord with that of the subject whose subjective "existing," however much it involves past experience, occurs in the contingency of the present moment (LIA 298).

> And so I am trying to tell you what doing portraits meant to me, I had to find out what it was inside any one, and by any one I mean every one I had to find out inside every one what was in them that was intrinsically exciting and I had to find out not by what they said not by what they did not by how much or how little they resembled any other one but I had to find it

> out by the intensity of movement that there was inside in any one of them. (LIA 298)

In her initial attempts to create the compositional equivalent of the subject's intensity, a present-moment phenomenon, Stein developed a practice she called "talking and listening" designed to circumvent "looking" and to restrict her own observations to a succession of impressions (LIA 293). She attempted to align the compositional time of her writing, the "continuous present" to that of the portrait subject "as they are existing" (LIA 293). In place of conventional representation, the compositional totality of the portrait would render the "rhythm of anybody's personality" (LIA 293). Stein wrote portraits using the continuous present in this first style from 1908 to 1913, including her first portraits of Toklas, Picasso, Matisse, and Carl Van Vechten.

Perhaps the landscape homology was a particularly promising discovery because it allowed Stein to reprise the "problem of time" she had earlier formulated with a new, spatial solution. In 1922, when she extended her stay in St.-Rémy, living quietly and simply in the landscape of Cézanne, Stein sought a method that would allow her to admit the contingency of "looking" without thereby introducing the mimeticism of representation. It was landscape that prompted the wish to look at the world and the related risk of readmitting representation, and it was also landscape that presented the possibility that "looking" might not be limited to finding resemblance. Her landscape writing is not descriptive of the actual landscape nor a narrative account of the time passed there. When Stein renewed looking on the basis of landscape in the early 1920s, what she was looking *for* was the spatial "formation" of landscape, its composition as a structure of relations.

Landscape made things unfamiliar for Stein again. As a homology for composition, it imposed no ready assumptions about subjects and objects, and it made fascinating demands on preconceptions about the relation of viewer and viewed. The spatial model, whether a depthless plane or a field vibrating with dimensionality, permitted Stein to investigate how structure and events might embody presentational qualities. In the space opened in composition, figures or effects might be revealed, summoned, or occluded. Although perspective becomes difficult to fix, the figures or events of composition emerge and appear as things seen, *coming into view*, or *just fading from view*, seen in relation to others, and seen to move in

relation to others. Figures and events so composed can appear to occupy space, gathering, pulsating, or, like molecules, expanding with heat.

Surely landscape proved compelling for Stein because the landscape homology is compositional. Since Stein considered her writing "compositions," landscape is a visual analogy of her writing practice and puts her compositional method on view as both practice and model. As others have noted, *the play as landscape* for Stein must also involve a homology to landscape painting. "Stein's sense of landscape seems more painterly than theatrical," Lyn Hejinian has observed.[49] Even in its etymology, the word *landscape* is inextricably linked to painting. Without diminishing the strangeness of the "play as landscape" homology Stein proposes, it seems evident that landscape is discursive when it is landscape *painting*, and in her claims for landscape, Stein appears to treat the physical landscape as pictorial representation. Viewers "read" landscape painting as a particular "kind of language" according to Mark Roskill whose comprehensive study shows that, since its inception, landscape painting has been treated by viewers as a semiotic and intertextual medium, one with historically specific discursive codes for its creation and appreciation.[50]

Of course, Stein was the first to suggest painterly analogies to her work and from its earliest reception critics have followed suit, suggesting comparisons to Cubism in particular, and to the innovation of painters she admired such as Cézanne. Jane Palatini Bowers claims that the painterly analogy for playwriting freed Stein from the linear sequencing of narrative and gave her a model for treating the words of the play as material and visual objects that occupy space with the simultaneity associated with painting.[51] In developing the landscape homology for playwriting, Stein trades on the long historical intertwining of landscape painting and theater. Landscape painting deliberately employs proscenium effects, setting a stage for the elements on view, and is therefore a generative homology for Stein insofar as it foregrounds the artifice of theatrical representation, that is, making staging visible *as staging*. In my readings, I draw comparisons to visual models where Stein seems to attempt to imitate the spatial dimensions, figure–ground relations, or open form of painting. Like Picasso, Stein worked by giving herself a compositional task or problem, reversing its terms in further experiments, and abruptly shifting to a new compositional task when she thought she had resolved or exhausted the task at hand. This accounts for the pronounced changes in the styles of her work over years. Therefore, the painterly analogy helps not only to track her formulation of spatial compositional strategies, but to follow her

method insofar as it prompts us to examine how successive texts may be linked.

In painting or in person, landscape offers an alluring paradox: at the same time that it is "simply there," a scenic view the viewer comes upon, it is, evidently, a view constructed by the viewer. For Stein, this apparent paradox made the analogy potent insofar as it offered a model for similar paradoxes in written composition of a kind that interested her. Emotion that invests experience with meaning *takes time*, but in the pure simultaneity of landscape its expression might transpire or seem to hover with the immediacy and intensity Stein associated with "existing" (LIA 293). Evidently, landscape possesses a quality of presentational force that Stein sought to imitate. By means of its compositional formation or totality, landscape imparts qualities of encounter, immanence, absorption, or indifference. If Stein could approximate this force in writing, then perhaps she could create an equivalent for engagement with the world that would have similar potency and expressive force. Through her experiments with landscape, Stein finds methods for expressing emotion as a presentational force in composition, and for evoking the continuity and intensity of intimacy within the mutability of contingent experience.

Landscape and Time

We can recognize the problem of time Stein addresses when we make manifest its implications for our own problem, that is, how to read Stein. Years ago, I devised an impossible critical method for interpreting Stein's work. It would consist in reading the same text every day for months, each time tracing the adventures of a different set of words across the composition. The result would be a series of readings of the text, each more or less dependent in an unpredictable way on the others, none claiming privileged place. Taken together, the set of readings would offer a panoramic view of the problems posed by the text in its particular distribution of terms. My imagined critical practice would have the merit of replicating Stein's writing practice of "always and always beginning again" (LIA 278). The rewards of repetition—seeing the "same" field changed by a new question—surely would repay the effort. But just as surely such an approach would tax any reader's patience and the desire for more conclusive interpretation. Given what I've had to say about the paradoxes Stein saw sustained in landscape, it should be clear that my imagined critical method would fail for an even more fundamental reason. Painstaking and

laborious as it might seem, the method would be an attempt to circumvent the very paradox that makes Stein's writing *composition*: we are obliged to appreciate the compositional totality *at the same time* that we are pulled in different directions by the vectors of individual words or their distribution in series. As Stein wisely observed, "When it gets really difficult you want to disentangle rather than to cut the knot" (LIA 320).

This amounts to a problem of time; not only whether we have time for Stein, for the kind of reading and re-reading of texts and neighboring texts that her work rewards, but whether she succeeds in transforming knowledge or experience that *took time* to acquire into compositional properties whose expressive force occurs *all at once*.

Like Gilles Deleuze who invites us to consider two different readings of time in his analysis of Stoic thought, Stein's experiments result in markedly different presentations of time: an expansive, suspended present and a ceaseless becoming in which we cannot fix the present moment.[52] Initially, the lateral relations of landscape seemed to her a pictorial model for the coexistence of time senses. Landscape was a model of simultaneity, a space in which the present is not eclipsed by another present to become past. Indelibly present, the landscape also endures. Likewise, the vitality of present experience occurs within an envelope of duration. Present and past coexist. While it seems a model for stasis, landscape made it possible for Stein to study processes that are endlessly changing, in particular, the changing relation of chance and choice.

Seen from another vantage point, however, landscape is not a space of immanence, rather it takes shape we say *before our very eyes*. Seeking to imitate this aspect of landscape, Stein rendered the flux of perceptual experience, hoping to capture traces of motion in thinking and feeling states in the lineaments of language use. In this space, she might express processes that elude ordinary representation, the contingent, the as-not-yet-classified, and the inchoate. In her plays, Stein sought to replace narrative drama and instead "to make a play the essence of what happened" (LIA 261). In composition, *what happens* is nowhere localized; it transpires, skimming the surface of the text, released through perpetual doing and undoing. This too had important consequences for time. By focusing on mutable, transitive relations, Stein explores the time sense of becoming, one in which the present moment is elided or never *takes place*. This time sense emerges in the strange mobility of place in her landscape plays and in "An Elucidation." Although much anticipated, explanation does not take place. We leap over the moment in which it should occur or the space

it should fill, and yet, for all its incessant displacement, explanation somehow transpires. Deleuze has conceded, "Plato rightly said that the instant is *atopon*, without place."[53]

Landscape and Knowledge

In successive landscape experiments, Stein appears to have discovered that the paradox sustained in landscape, namely that is it both constructed by a viewer and "simply there" is similar to the paradox she thought structures knowledge. "How do you know anything," Stein asked in a 1935 lecture, "well you know anything as complete knowledge as having it completely in you at the actual moment that you have it. That is what knowledge is, and essentially therefore knowledge is not succession but an immediate existing."[54] Problems of representation, including the challenges of portraiture, belie a paradox in the nature of knowledge itself: knowledge may be acquired incrementally, but the subjective experience of "knowing" seems immediate and present. Whereas Stein had formerly understood this paradox in "knowing" in temporal terms, experiments with the landscape homology became the grounds for recasting the problem in spatial terms. The paradoxes of landscape would provide Stein with a complex model for exploring "knowing" as if it were both procedural, a matter of moment-by-moment construction, and ineffable, expressed only through the totality of composition.

As I have suggested, in order to follow Stein's experiments, reading "composition as explanation," we will need an alternative to a representational theory of knowledge. A representational model assumes a mimetic relation between the objects of experience and rational processes, and this presumed correspondence limits the conception of experience to what can be represented. If thought begins with *something*, it is a something that conforms to the conceptualization and classification of representation. Representation depends upon substitution, in particular the operations of denotation and signification, and on the predication of subjects and objects that are assigned positive states of determination. During the early 1920s when Stein treats landscape as a composition of relations, she proposes a model of equivalence in place of representation. This involves asserting the equivalence of non-substitutable terms and shifting focus to the relations among terms. Landscape is the visual homology for this model of equivalence: it is constituted by the elements in composition which are not changed or displaced by addition, and sense emerges as the expression of

relations in the multiple connections crossing the text. Clearly, a model of equivalence is painterly as landscape painting is a homogeneous composition of elements. We see that for texts modeled on this kind of equivalence and homogeneous distribution, a representational theory of knowledge which depends on substitution does not engage the experiment at hand.

Instead, the epistemology Stein comes to in these years is consistent with the radical empiricism of William James, her former professor, and of Gilles Deleuze, who extends the empiricism of Hume. In its emphasis on relations, radical empiricism introduces a paratactic discourse in place of a dialogic one, a surface model in place of a depth model. It shifts the site and operation of meaningfulness from terms and their determination for subjects, to the lateral activity of relations, and thereby allows for the possibility of the pre-predicative, for an exploration *in language* of expression that exceeds or falls beyond the forms of representation.

Reading Stein, we confront "the problem of novelty," namely how to analyze her work without imposing expectations associated with representation and rationalism. The "problem of novelty," as James and others recognized, stems from what philosophers call the causal inference.[55] If we understand that things are caused and that the experience of causality results from the constant conjunction of distinct impressions, then novelty cannot exist since even novel things must already be associated with a cause. The challenge of Deleuze's radical empiricism is to conceive of conditions for the production of novelty, to allow for non-preexistent concepts to emerge. We might borrow its question in reading Stein: how can we imagine conditions for the production of the new without limiting our conception of the new to those conditions?[56] I will have more to say concerning radical empiricism in the next chapter, but for now, I want to try to introduce its appeal. We want to read Stein's experiments while preserving their status as experiments, including experiments that take us well beyond a grammar of predication in an approach that does not anticipate what is new in Stein according to predetermined conditions.

A representational theory of knowledge limits us to the familiar, defining and fixing the objects of experience through determination, disregarding all else as "background," nonsense, or chaos. But for an empiricist the "essence of what happen[s]" is dynamic flux, movement rather than determination, and one seeks to come into contact with what is as-yet-undetermined (LIA 261). In contrast to a transcendental model in which the mind is a kind of filter between the subject and the given, for James and for Deleuze mental activity is but one activity within a larger set of forces

that together comprise reality. To emphasize relations rather than subjects and objects is to conceive of thinking as composed of the same processes everywhere unfolding in the flux of which thinking is a part, rather than to think of mental activity as different in kind or a matter of picturing objects. It is to replace an ontological model of determination with a relational model in which change occurs and meaningfulness obtains by means of making connections in an activity understood to preserve the differences among elements. Beyond or outside the realm of representation, there is a pre-predicative plane—for James, it is "a world of pure experience" and for Deleuze, "a zone of indetermination"—whereby every determination is accompanied by indetermination.[57] Rejecting transcendentalism, Deleuze claims that there is a flux of existence that is unconditioned and from which we might extract new, previously unthought concepts.

We can see that landscape may serve as a visual model for the empiricist conceptualization of experience or consciousness, thereby emphasizing its constructed nature: pure experience is a teeming flux, we create certain relations between some elements and not others, as when viewing a landscape we are aware of framing a view. Or, put differently, the emphasis on relations in radical empiricism is a matter of letting the "background" come forward as Stein does on a painterly model, testing the varied effects of framing and of reversing figure–ground in successive experiments. The subject is displaced as perspective, immersed as it is in a field of forces, and "background" relations "come forward" as a site of meaning that is not meaning determined for subjects.

Stein appears to have understood that it is *only in language* that we might glimpse the infinite potential of conjunctive and disjunctive relations, and thereby conceive of reality from a perspective other than that conditioned by representation. I agree with Steven Meyer that Stein's work is best understood when we "approach it in the spirit of radical empiricism in which it was composed," but I differ in focusing my analysis on the sequence of Stein's composition rather than on her experience of writing.[58] In his interdisciplinary study, *Irresistible Dictation: Gertrude Stein and the Correlations of Writing and Science*, Meyer treats Stein's writing as radical empiricism in practice ("a form of experimental science itself") and situates her investigations in the context of developments in nineteenth-century scientific thought and speculative philosophy as well as a lineage of Romantic "poet-scientists."[59] Stein is a radical empiricist for Meyer (more radical in his estimation even than her teacher, William James) because in a "poetic science," she uses the activity of her own writing to test the

theory that the conjunctive relations of experience are themselves constituent of the experience or, put simply, that consciousness is inseparable from content.[60] When stripped of the habits of association, experimental writing becomes a testing ground for the relations between words and for the relations that constitute experience, or, as Meyer claims, writing becomes "medium, or middle ground, of body and idea."[61] Experimental writing has epistemological implications since knowledge is an embodied process for the radical empiricist. Meyer comes to the bold conclusion that Stein's *Tender Buttons* is an "explicitly physiological sense of writing" and a means therefore of examining "at least one form of feeling—'feel[ing] writing'—by rendering it visible."[62] While I agree that Stein practices a radical empiricism in her writing, surely her experience of "feel[ing] writing" cannot be our subject as readers, unless with each development in her work we are satisfied to reprise the conclusions of radical empiricism in general terms. We want to learn what Stein discovered by means of a particular experiment, and for this, as I have suggested, we will need a critical approach to identify and trace the compositional problem at hand. Meyer suggests as much when he observes that although Stein's "composition as explanation," an experimental form of explanation, "remains implicit in poetic science, it may nonetheless be deduced and made explicit from the compositional features of particular experiments."[63]

In the early 1920s, the compositional experiment concerns the relation of emotion and time, and the landscape homology creates a nonhuman, spatial dimension in which pre-predicative forms of expression emerge. Rather than begin with subjects and objects, Stein begins with the processes of language, including its odd capacity to express without a speaker, to impart meaning with and without fixed denotation. The making of connections is expressive and significant in of itself without recourse to predicate logic that would determine for whom or in which cases meaning obtains. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, we find the extreme limits to which Stein was willing to take this experiment with pre-predicative states in the text, "Subject-Cases: The Background Of A Detective Story." Here and elsewhere, her experiments with language present us with the possibility of exploring states that have not already been determined by a subject-centered perspective, the predication of attributes, the logical attribution of premises, or the conditions for truth or falsity.

To follow Stein's innovation during her landscape period requires our openness to a new kind of logic, one that is deliberately pictorial, diagrammatic, or geographical. In this, she joins James whose imagination,

according to Gerard E. Meyers, was often schematic: "James invoked spatial, scenic imagery, and he often thought he had a grasp of a notion if he could imagine its application in a situation where seen things move relative to each other or one dynamic process occurs within the space of another."[64] Indeed, this suggests yet another way we might grasp the inadequacy of a representational theory of knowledge for interpreting Stein's work—in its determination of subjects and objects, it is insufficiently dynamic. Among her greatest ambitions was to create "an intensity of movement" in composition. In her lecture "Portraits And Repetition," Stein insists, "if the movement, that is any movement, is lively enough, perhaps it is possible to know that it is moving even if it is not moving against anything" (LIA 287). In the landscape experiments, Stein attempts to create space in which to generate this quality of dynamic and autonomous movement by means of intensive compositional relations. We might shift with Deleuze to a logic of relations as a means of tracking movement in the texts by surveying and diagramming the relations that emerge in open-ended constructions. What we hope to engage in reading Stein is a force that cannot be paraphrased or represented, but can only be traced or diagrammed through the trajectories generated in the text, both in individual sentences and overall in the composition. A radical empiricist model allows us to keep pace with the unfolding of the composition, its unfinished or not-yet-determined arc, the experiment in progress. At every point that we want to arrest the unfolding experiment, limiting its terms or implications, we should read on, locating this experiment in a series that continues to ramify across neighboring texts, constellating new problems, further questions.

The logic of relations does not hesitate to spread into a nonhuman or impersonal realm, a "zone of indetermination" that precedes and exceeds our expectations of familiar subjects and that, if we could only follow it, might lead us to explore novelty without subjecting it to prior conditions.[65] This seems to accord with the jarring realization we often have in reading Stein that her strange sentences involve an ontological stance we have not imagined or had the words to describe. It therefore helps us to follow the expressive dimension in Stein's work that cannot be said to concern either denotation or signification and is consistent with our impression, throughout, that her work *makes sense* only in a way that has hitherto eluded us.

And, for my part, it accords with the impression that for all its difficulty, it seems wrong to regard Stein's work as hermetic, a form of closed lan-

guage game. Although it exploits the resources of language more boldly than any other modernist writing, Stein's work is modernist in that it deploys the materiality of its medium and while it is autonomous, the text is not abstract: it is oriented to the world, it indicates things, and acknowledges the existence of the world as perceptual experience that eludes representation. The logic of relations gives us a method for tracking the unique role of language in making this relational gesture to the world of things while creating an expressive dimension that is not limited to conventional denotation or to fictive states of affairs.

If we can bear the strangeness of these new landscapes, Stein's writing can make us aware of the terrific vastness and plurality of the choices before us—not in what we happen to do or in what happens to occur—but in the unrealized expressive possibilities that subsist in every instantiation. Faced with uncertainty, we might recognize the contingency inherent in the very structure of the linguistic events by which we word and understand our choices. At every crossroads, we are pulled in many directions at once, including many that contest stable conceptions of identity and at every turn, chance is folded into choice. As Stein suggests, simply by reversing direction, "Happen to have" might become "Have it as happening" (SR 454 and 462).

Notes

1. Gertrude Stein, "Plays," from *Lectures In America* in *Gertrude Stein: Writings 1932-1946*, eds. Catherine R. Stimpson and Harriet Chessman (New York: The Library of America, 1998), 262–69. Subsequently cited in text as LIA.
2. Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography Of Alice B. Toklas* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books Edition, 1990; original copyright 1933), 209. Subsequently cited in text as ABT.
3. See Tirza True Latimer's summary of dance and dramatic productions of Stein's plays in *Seeing Gertrude Stein: Five Stories*, eds. Wanda M. Corn and Tirza True Latimer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 277–283. On Stein's influence on the playwright and director Richard Foreman, see Kate Davy, "Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theatre: The Influence of Gertrude Stein," *Twentieth Century Literature* 24 (1978): 108–26. For an account of the Judson Poets' Theater productions, see Lawrence Kornfeld, "From a Director's Notebook—How the

Curtain Did Come: Conflict and Change—The Theatre of Gertrude Stein," *Performing Arts Journal* 1.1 (Spring 1976): 33–39.

4. "Composition As Explanation" is the title Stein gave her address to Oxford and Cambridge Universities when her lecture was published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1926). Reprinted without Stein's examples in *Gertrude Stein: Writings 1903-1932*, eds. Catherine R. Stimpson and Harriet Chessman (New York: The Library of America, 1998), 520–29 and in Ulla E. Dydo, ed., *A Stein Reader* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 493–503. *A Stein Reader* subsequently cited in text as SR.
5. Marjorie Perloff, *Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 145–161.
6. Peter Quartermain, *Disjunctive Poetics: From Gertrude Stein and Louis Zukofsky to Susan Howe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 29. See also Joan Retallack's "The Difficulties of Gertrude Stein, I & II" in which she proposes that Stein's writing is a "fractal poetics" because it suggests attention to "large patterns and erratic details" and because meaning in the Steinian text is partially constituted by the reader. In *The Poethical Wager* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 153 and 163. Concerning Stein's *Blood On The Dining Room Floor*, Retallack writes: "Stein's enthusiasm for real detecting, for not explaining, is an actively imaginative ethos of an ever 'rolling' investigation released from the finalities of explanation or the death—to art—that is brought on by premature classification," 159.
7. Dydo, SR, headnote, 429. I agree with Dydo when she observes, "Yet the biographical context, whose importance I recognized, does not explain [Stein's] work, which she insisted was not autobiographical and had to be read literally, as pure writing, without explanation or introductions," in Ulla E. Dydo with William Rice, *The Language That Rises, 1923-1934* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 5–6.
8. Ibid., 47.
9. For a critical review, including Dydo's tendency to rely on biography in her interpretation of texts, see John Whittier-Ferguson,

Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises, 1923-1934 (Review) Modernism/modernity 12, no. 4 (November 2005): 723–726.

10. Dydo, *The Language That Rises,* 41–2.
11. Ibid., 83.
12. Ibid., 48.
13. Gertrude Stein, *The Making Of Americans* (Normal, Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 1995; original edition 1925), 26.
14. "Gertrude Stein: A Radio Interview," *Paris Review*, no. 116 (Fall 1990), 89. The interview was conducted by William Lundell, an NBC reporter, and broadcast on November 12, 1934.
15. Jennifer Ashton, *From Modernism to Postmodernism: American Poetry and Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2.
16. Ibid., 3.
17. Marjorie Perloff, *21st-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 1, 5. On the "anti-symbolist mode of indeterminacy," see Perloff's *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999, original edition, 1981), vii.
18. Perloff, *21st-Century Modernism*, 3.
19. Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, vii.
20. Perloff, *21st-Century Modernism*, 26.
21. Ibid., 9.
22. Although Ashton objects to a theoretical and critical approach that "displace[s] what, in its broadest terms, we might call the 'meaning' of the text by the reader's experience of it," in fact the criticism written by the critics and poets she cites does not devolve into reports of their subjective engagement with or experience of the text, 2. For critical readings of *Tender Buttons*, see Lyn Hejinian's "Language and Realism," one of "Two Stein Talks" in *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 86–105, and Peter Quartermain in *Disjunctive Poetics,* 24–29; as well as Marjorie Perloff's reading of "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" in *21st-Century Modernism,* 56–63.
23. Ashton, *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, 25.
24. Ibid., 78.
25. Quartermain, *Disjunctive Poetics,* 21.
26. Lyn Hejinian discusses the influence of Cézanne and Flaubert on Stein's developing notion of composition in her essay "Three

Lives," in *The Language of Inquiry*, 268–295. Perloff, *21st-Century Modernism*, 54.

27. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* in *Writings 1902-1910*, ed., Bruce Kuklick (New York: The Library of America, 1987), 751.
28. Steven Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation: Gertrude Stein and the Correlations of Writing and Science* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 46.
29. Dydo, *The Language That Rises*, 58–9. Dydo does not recognize that Stein sustains a compositional problem and works on it systematically: "Her texts do not progress linearly from one concern, say, with grammar, or with the novel, to another," 5. When she claims that "[a]lways one Stein piece engenders the next, so that each becomes a context for the next," Dydo identifies the biographical context informing successive texts rather than a compositional task, 78. For example, Dydo contends that the anxiety and excitement Stein experienced in 1926 upon accepting the invitation to lecture at Cambridge and Oxford Universities is the context for the texts she wrote concurrently with her lecture, including *A Novel Of Thank You* and "Natural Phenomena," 82–90. She finds "evidence of the address" in the novel and treats this as context for the texts, rather than offering interpretation of Stein's experiment with narrative, 82. n9.
30. Stein, *Saints And Singing* in *SR*, 386. *Capital Capitals*, SR 419. *A List*, SR 401 and in *passim*. See also the punning allusion to Caesar in the line "Can intend to seize her objects seize the objects place the objects," SR 401. "An Elucidation," SR 431 and in *passim*, "*Jonas Julian Caesar And Samuel*," *in Painted Lace And Other Pieces (1914-1937),* Volume Five of the Yale Edition of the *Unpublished Writings of Gertrude Stein* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 289. Subsequently cited as PL.
31. Stein, *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions* in *Useful Knowledge* (New York: Station Hill Press, 1988), 171, 177, 179 and in *passim*. Subsequently cited as UK.
32. Dates of composition according to Dydo in *The Language That Rises*, 61n and "Chronological Listing, 1923-34," 634.
33. A reproduction of the 1932 Plain Edition publication of *Operas And Plays* was later reprinted (New York: Station Hill Press, 1987). *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions* was published by Payson & Clarke in 1928 and later reprinted in UK by Station Hill Press. The play

is also available in the anthology, *The Gertrude Stein Reader*, edited and with an introduction by Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002). *Saints And Singing*, *A List* and *Capital Capitals* are available in *SR*. *Jonas Julian Caesar And Samuel* was published in *PL*.

34. See, for example, Jane Palatini Bowers who adapts Stein's term "landscape," and considers all of the plays Stein wrote between 1920 and 1933 "lang-scapes," in *"They Watch Me as They Watch This"*: *Gertrude Stein's Metadrama* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 2–3.
35. Dydo, *The Language That Rises*, 129.
36. According to Dydo in *The Language That Rises*, the experiment with landscape plays begins with the plays Stein wrote during her 1922–23 stay in St.-Rémy, 265. Dydo interprets the line "its beginning in twenty two" in a later play *Paisieu* (1928) as reference to Stein's first experiment in writing landscape plays in 1922, 265. See Dydo's account of the landscape play: "The painterly term 'landscape' describes a play that aspires to the condition of landscape—total theater, complete, present to eye and ear, moving at every moment, defeating time and memory," 265–6.
37. Bert Cardullo and Robert Knopf, eds., *Theater of the Avant-Garde, 1890-1950: A Critical Anthology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 20.
38. Arnold Aronson, *American Avant-Garde Theatre: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 30.
39. Tirza True Latimer summarizes productions in *Seeing Gertrude Stein: Five Stories*, 277–283. See also Sarah Bay-Cheng's list of professional productions of Stein's plays in *Mama Dada: Gertrude Stein's Avant-Garde Theater* (New York: Routledge, 2004) and Leslie Atkins Durham's descriptions of productions in *Staging Gertrude Stein: Absence, Culture, and the Landscape of American Alternative Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Bay-Cheng considers Stein "the first genuine avant-garde dramatist of her country," and given that she finds a "pessimistic worldview" in Stein's plays 25, she identifies similarities in her plays to those of Apollinaire, Tzara, and Roger Vitrac, 2 and 19. But the formal properties Bay-Cheng considers avant-garde or cinematic (visual, fragmentation, repetition, collage) are, of course, also modernist, 23 and 37. Jane Palatini Bowers concludes that Stein's plays differ

significantly from Cubo-Futurist, Surrealist, and Dadaist plays in two fundamental respects: Stein's plays do not share the anti-bourgeois antagonism and nihilism of these avant-garde movements, and the text is paramount in Stein's plays whereas "[f]or the antagonistic avant-garde, the text is of minimal importance" in "*They Watch Me as They Watch This*," 131.

40. John Brinckerhoff Jackson, "Landscape as Theater," in *The Necessity for Ruins* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 69. This essay was originally published in the journal *Landscape* 23, no.1 (1979): 3–7.
41. Ibid., 70.
42. Denis Cosgrove, "Spectacle and Society: Landscape as Theater in Premodern and Postmodern Cities," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, eds. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 101. In this intriguing essay, Cosgrove traces a shift in sixteenth- to seventeenth-century Venetian painting in the valuation of authenticity from "eyewitness" paintings to narrative, treating this as emblematic of the continuing struggle over visual or textual truth. Cosgrove sees the "metaphor of theater" as a way to circumvent this opposition and to present the relation of image and text as "a dialectic between representational modes, or metaphors, historically in a constant and intense struggle over meaning," 100.
43. Jackson, "Landscape as Theater," 73. More recently, medievalists have revised the notion of a radical break between theater forms that emerged in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe and forms that came before the "birth of modern theatre" such as feast-day processionals, church plays, or saints' plays. According to Julie Stone Peters, most scholars agree, however, that critical changes in the form occurred between late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; the features most often identified with the origins of modern theater include "fixed scenic spaces; buildings used exclusively for the production of plays; performances divorced from festivals or specific events; professional actors and acting troupes; customers who expected to pay for seats; the regular use of fixed texts; the wide circulation of playbooks; dramas modelled on ancient forms; a shift in the primary connotation of the word 'theatre' from visual displays generally, to scenic representations with

actors," *Theatre of the Book 1480-1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 313 n2.

44. Aronson, 28. In his account of Stein's influence on the post-World War II American avant-garde, Aronson claims that Stein's plays shift the creative processing of the experience from artist to the spectator.
45. Bowers links Stein's analogy to landscape to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *theatrum mundi* topos in "*They Watch Me as They Watch This*," 25–26.
46. Jackson, "Landscape as Theater," 74. I rely on Jackson's description of the popular theater of the spectacle.
47. Barbara Maria Stafford and Frances Terpak, *Devices of Wonder: From the World in a Box to Images on a Screen* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001), 326.
48. Bowers observes that in her lecture "Pictures," Stein recalls seeing a panorama of the battle of Waterloo in her youth. About Stein's response she concludes: "Indeed, in that it revealed and reveled in its own paintedness, the panorama turned painting into a kind of theater or performance. The panorama was only one of many such spectacles, including the diorama, from the late eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries, in which landscape was the key subject and that foregrounded the mechanics by which the illusion was created." In "The Composition That All the World Can See: Gertrude Stein's Theater Landscapes," *Land/Scape/Theater*, eds. Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 129.
49. Lyn Hejinian, "Grammar and Landscape," one of "Two Stein Talks" in *The Language of Inquiry*, 116.
50. Mark Roskill, *The Languages of Landscape* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 8–9.
51. Bowers, "*They Watch Me as They Watch This*," 26.
52. Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990; original, 1969), 162–168.
53. Ibid., 166.
54. Stein, Lecture 2 in *Narration: Four Lectures By Gertrude Stein* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), 20. These were lectures Stein gave to students at the University of Chicago in March, 1935. Subsequently cited in the text as *N*.

55. William James, *Some Problems of Philosophy* in *Writings 1902-1910*, 1079.
56. Daniel W. Smith, "The Conditions of the New," *Deleuze Studies* 1 (June 2007): 1–21. Deleuze asserts that "[e]mpiricism starts with a completely different evaluation [than rationalism]: analysing the states of things, in such a way that non-preexistent concepts can be extracted from them. States of things are neither unities nor totalities, but *multiplicities*," in Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987; original 1977), vii.
57. "A World of Pure Experience," is the title of James's essay published in 1904 in *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* and reprinted in James, *Writings 1902-1910*, 1159–1182. Gilles Deleuze and Féliz Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994; original 1991), 173.
58. Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation,* 28.
59. Ibid., xxi.
60. Ibid., 21. Donald Sutherland was among the first to recognize that in her writing practice, Stein conflates "thought and thinker" (as did James), replacing the notion of consciousness as an entity with activity or "thinking in relation," in *Gertrude Stein: A Biography of Her Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), 6.
61. Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation,* 240.
62. Ibid., 28.
63. Ibid., 37.
64. Gerald E. Myers, *William James: His Life and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 317.
65. Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 173.

CHAPTER 1

Making Sense: Stein's Radical Epistemology

In March of 1923 toward the end of her stay in St.-Rémy, Stein began "An Elucidation," a composition she completed once at home in Paris the following month.[1] Within the sequence of her landscape writing, this piece follows the initial landscape plays in which Stein explores the visual analogy, and precedes the second portraits, a confident return to portraiture with a new style. Although it is an intervening text in the series and includes the recurrent phrases of this period, "An Elucidation" is also unique in its aspiration to elucidate or explain. When we recognize that the piece is self-reflexive of the experimental method of this period "An Elucidation" offers a valuable form of instruction for readers and critics who seek methods of reading Stein without resorting to conventional explanation. As I have proposed, reading Stein's work in compositional sequence reveals the outlines of her experiment, but I will make an exception with this text because it offers metadiscursive commentary on the unfolding experiment and therefore provides a reading model. By discussing the text out of the sequence of composition, I can use its analysis of explanation to illustrate the sorts of strategies and textual properties we observe when we read Stein's landscape writing in accordance with its epistemological premises. A more conventional set of expectations concerning meaning and explanation will limit our understanding of the textual experiment—or, perhaps prevent our recognizing the experiment altogether. Through a close reading of "An Elucidation" and a theoretical analysis of its epistemological implications, this chapter offers a guideline for adopting a critical method

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in keeping with the form of elucidation Stein practices. Playful and lively, "An Elucidation" resounds with the bold assurance of a writer investigating the implications of her landscape homology for knowledge and explanation. It explores the startling question that results from Stein's experiments with landscape, namely, what becomes of knowledge if it is reconceived as requiring space to occupy or in which to transpire rather than "taking" time?

Even Stein's most careful critics have failed to recognize the epistemological implications of "An Elucidation." For example, while Dydo considers the text "a meditation upon writing, reading, explaining, understanding," she does not grant that Stein makes a methodical analysis of conventional explanation. Instead, she describes "An Elucidation" as "[a] collection of small pieces of writing which seem to float unattached in midair" and concludes that the text "does not appear grounded in a dominant principle such as the title suggests."[2] But if we do not read the text as "elucidation," we miss the metadiscursive challenge it poses: readers must scrutinize the conventions of explanation we employ at the same time that we endeavor to understand what Stein means by elucidation.[3] What's more, in its procedures the text reveals that explanation itself, or the process of "making sense" is a strangely elusive event. Much like Alice of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* who is invited to "Take some more tea" at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, though she has had none as yet to drink, explanation in Stein's text is always about to occur, or has just occurred, but never happens—it seems not to have *taken place*, and yet it has occurred.[4] Time and time again explanation gives us the slip in "An Elucidation."

> I will now explain dishes.
> I have explained that. (433)

We look to examples of the text for guidance, but these fail to operate as ordinarily in support of precepts or to advance an argument. The text unfolds largely through the proliferation of examples, yet these are not "examples of" something and are not subsumed as they would be in a conventional argument.

> I will now give more examples.
> She is in and out
> It is placed in there
> Happily say so

Too happily say so
Very communicative. (431)

Still at many points punctuating the text Stein rallies herself to explain, "Now to explain," or seems satisfied to have explained: "A serious explanation" (436, 433). What are we to make of these assertions?

Through a close reading of "An Elucidation," I will demonstrate that we can treat "composition as explanation," and make sense of these confident assertions. The obstacles we confront in setting aside rationalist presuppositions are considerable and I want to first briefly discuss the difficulty that Stein herself encountered when presenting "Composition As Explanation," her lecture by that title, as a reminder of how readily conventions of explanation re-emerge and limit our capacity to imagine new forms of knowledge.

"Let Me Explain Properly": "Composition As Explanation" (1926)

In June of 1926 Stein gave her first public lectures at the Cambridge Literary Club and at Oxford University. Edith Sitwell, her friend and supporter, had instigated the invitations hoping the exposure would result in a wider audience for Stein's work. When Hogarth Press later published the lecture, it was titled "Composition As Explanation." Stein had initially declined the invitation from the Cambridge Literary Club, but when the Oxford Ordinary also extended an invitation she couldn't resist the opportunity.[5] Harold Acton, the president of the Ordinary, fatuously described the scene on the lecture dais where Stein, a "squat Aztec figure in obsidian," was seated with "her tall bodyguard of Sitwells."[6] A tiny detail about Stein's first public appearance is far more telling: Stein refused to be introduced at either venue, reasoning that the audience knew perfectly well whom they had come to see. This was not merely a personal tick. Introduction, of course, is a framing device, and one that Stein resisted in her writing in favor of compositional homogeny. But so too is explanation, where one set of terms explains another. Stein's nervousness about giving the lecture is understandable: lecturing put her in the untenable position of explaining work that she firmly believed needed no explanation. The results are instructive for readers and critics who seek ways to understand Stein's work without giving an explanation *for* it. How are we to interpret work that so obviously contests conventional modes of explanation?

The shortcomings of Stein's lecture can serve as a cautionary primer. In her lecture Stein develops an analogy between "modern composition" and modernity, the "composition in the world" (*SR* 496, 498). Rhetorically, it is a masterful move: she does not have to explain the strangeness of her writing to an audience that has accepted the strangeness of modernity.[7] Change from one generation to the next results from response to the changes in the overall composition of daily life, "The only thing that is different from one time to another is what is seen and what is seen depends upon how everybody is doing everything" (495). Registering change from one generation to another is a matter of recognizing changes in composition, and Stein naturalizes her compositional method by aligning it with the composition of modern life: "Each period of living differs from any other period of living not in the way life is but in the way life is conducted and that authentically speaking is composition" (498). She presents her formal innovations in the time sense of composition as though they were inevitable—as if the "age demanded" the "prolonged present."[8]

> A composition of a prolonged present is a natural composition in the world as it has been these thirty years it was more and more a prolonged present. I created then a prolonged present naturally I knew nothing of a continuous present but it came naturally to me to make one, it was simple it was clear to me and nobody knew why it was done like that, I did not myself although naturally to me it was natural. (498)

While this opening salvo may have been a compelling bid for acceptance of her work, the analogy Stein draws between "the expression of the modern composition" and modernity begins to break down over the course of her lecture because of its limitations as an account of further innovation (501). Merely to claim that innovative writing is a "natural" response to a radically changed modern world does not distinguish among literary experiments or their particular stakes. Stein's own work offers abundant examples of this. When she redeployed certain formal innovations of her earliest narrative experiments in her initial portraits in 1908, Stein produced new compositional effects that in turn suggested further compositional possibilities, namely the curious properties associated with repetition. Her experiments with the continuous present led to investigations of the operation of difference in the context of apparent sameness until finally she lost interest in the continuous present. In her account "simply different" emerges just as "naturally" as did the continuous present (500).

But in practice, Stein's use of the prolonged present or the continuous present (terms she uses fairly synonymously) drops away, not because of changes in the "composition in the world," but because she has exhausted this formal method. Subsequent innovations stem from formal solutions to compositional problems of her own devising: "More and more in going back over what was done at this time I find that I naturally kept simply different as an intention. Whether there was or whether there was not a continuous present did not then any longer trouble me" (500).

If the composition of modernity ("the thing seen by every one living in the living they are doing") truly explained changes in the composition of artistic expression, then continued innovation should not require further explanation (497). But by the close of her lecture, Stein has ceased to treat the time sense of composition as though it were dictated by modernity; time sense may be "distributed and equilibrated" as a compositional property in its own right (502). No less sure of its importance, she is however uncertain what these new experiments involving time sense will produce, conceding that "at present the time-sense is troubling" (503). By this point in her lecture, Stein is chafing at the "natural" imposition of compositional strategies and eager to represent innovation as a set of related discoveries that emerges from her work: "Distribution is interesting and equilibration is interesting when a continuous present and a beginning again and again and again and using everything and everything alike and everything naturally simply different has been done" (502). Of course, if the time sense of the text changes as the result of open-ended formal innovation, there is no guarantee of its "natural" accord with the modern era. This shift in the closing pages of the lecture exposes a contradiction that was there all along; the recognition of change in composition is the result of construction, not a natural or received activity. Stein's phrasing reveals as much, "[composition] makes what is seen *as* it is seen" (497, emphasis added).

The point I want to make is that Stein's analogy breaks down not so much on the basis of its claims, but because the very structure of analogy requires further explanation. In place of the equivalence suggested by "composition as explanation," this analogy triggers a chain of explanations in which further accounts of a similar kind would be necessary to support subsequent claims. Even if the composition of "the thing seen" explains changes from one generation to the next, it does not explain the nature of those changes or the introduction of subsequent changes. Cleverly staged as an explanation as to why her work needs no explanation, Stein's lec-

ture is nonetheless based on a fairly conventional structure of explanation that begins with an analogy, asserts naturalizing claims, and ends with examples. Indeed, like criticism in which Stein's anti-patriarchal or other purported intentions are made to account for her writing practices, the lecture is marred by treating composition as though it were an explanation of something else, explaining or accounting for one thing in terms of another, rather than treating composition as an explanation in its own right. But what can it mean to regard composition as explanation?

How Stein Makes Sense: "An Elucidation" (1923)

In contrast to Stein's lecture we have such a demonstration of "composition as explanation" in "An Elucidation." This text is an elucidation, but not of the sort readers of the 1927 spring edition of *transition*, where it first appeared, might have expected. Rather than an explanatory account of her literary practices, "An Elucidation" is a compositional exploration of explanation itself, an effort at "making sense" of what it means to "make sense." This metadiscursive aspect of the text in which individual statements test the properties of sense accounts for a good deal of its difficulty. The composition of "An Elucidation" tells us what Stein discovered concerning both the limitations of conventional explanation and her radical alternative for making sense.

Stein wrote "An Elucidation" in the spring of 1923 after preparing the manuscript of *Geography And Plays*, her first collected volume, for publication the previous fall. The book is a collection of works Stein wrote before World War I (WWI). Dydo speculates that rereading her earlier work and the anticipation that the book would be critically reviewed may have prompted Stein's interest in explanation.[9] Of course, if biographical events led Stein to expect that she would soon be pressed to explain herself, these events cannot account for the particular form of her inquiry or the solution she proposes in "An Elucidation," a radical equivalence of composition and explanation.

Right from the start we find the ground falling away. Beginning with the title, "An Elucidation" initiates the central ambiguity of the text: will what follows be an account of elucidation itself, a kind of definition or portrait of what constitutes elucidation? Or will it be an elucidation *of* something—something other than elucidation? Skimming forward we find section headings that only perpetuate this ambiguity further: "An instance," "Elucidation," "More beginning," "A settled explanation," "Now to explain," "Another Example," "A Question," and "First

Example" (*SR* 430–9). Do these subheadings introduce further examples or components of an argument which taken together explain something, or do they illustrate the practice of elucidation? Recognizing that "Elucidation" reappears as a subheading, is the title, "An Elucidation," simply the initiating member of this series of headings, and does it thereby lose its status as a title, that is, as a precept followed and supported by examples? Perhaps the text introduced by each subheading constitutes a discrete elucidation and we mustn't expect that elucidation itself will be explained as a compilation of examples. We have fallen into a metadiscursive rabbit hole. Insofar as Stein can sustain this uncertainty about the relation of precept to example she presses us to evaluate what we mean by elucidation. Is elucidation an abstraction drawn from the completed composition, something that can be concluded once demonstrated, or is it the activity of elucidating, an event that transpires between discrete examples? In the opening pages of the piece, Stein methodically tests the premises of conventional explanation, including the relation of precept to example, the hierarchical ordering of terms, the role of substitution, the reversal of claims, and the bearing of truth or falsity on explanation.

Initially, it seems the speaker plans to define elucidation by distinguishing it from its near synonym, explanation. If we could distinguish between "halve" and "have," the speaker suggests, so too might we distinguish between elucidation and explanation. The text is an example of making and frustrating such distinctions.

Halve Rivers and Harbors.

Elucidation.
First as Explanation.
Elucidate the problem of halve.
Halve and have. (430)

The suggestion that we might distinguish between "halve and have" (itself a play on division) is immediately frustrated by the speaker's comical rejoinder that one may "halve" rivers all one likes and still not "have" them: "you do see that halve rivers and harbors, makes halve rivers and harbors and you do see, you do see that you that you do not have rivers and harbors when you halve rivers and harbors, you do see that you can halve rivers and harbors" (430). With a sly allusion to the impossibility of stepping into the same river twice (and a pun on *Le Havre*, "The Harbour," the port in the Seine), the speaker signals that we will not define elucidation by distinguishing it from explanation—we won't "have" a definition by "halves."[10]

But rather than summarizing this finding or introducing a third term that might subsume the examples set forth, the speaker abruptly moves on to add still more examples. The next subheading is "Madrigal and Mardigras," another pairing distinguished only slightly by spelling (431). With this example, we detect a pattern—rather than parse the difference between "elucidation" and "explanation," the speaker has simply continued in sequence from the letter "L" which distinguished "halve" and "have" to the letter "M" which introduces "Madrigal and Mardigras." Stein's initiation of multiple series that interrogate how meaning proceeds draws her text into conversation with others that investigate the role of language practices in the determination of meaning. "An Elucidation" includes many allusions to Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and her serial method anticipates that of Gilles Deleuze in *The Logic of Sense*, a book that is composed of series in a playful analysis of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.[11]

The proliferation of series in "An Elucidation" makes it evident that the text does not move from most to least differentiated states with what Deleuze calls the "unidirection of good sense," affirming a single direction, or from initial premise subsuming less differentiated material.[12] Instead, the phonological pairings of "halve and have" and "Madrigal and Mardigras" indicate that explanation, which has been drawn into this series, will advance in multiple and seemingly arbitrary directions at once. The letter "M" follows on the letter "L," but why begin with these letters? Apparently, because of the speaker's unexplained attachment to the letter: "I have always been fond of writing the letter M. and so although Mardigras and Madrigal have more appreciation from me than they might they do not make more questions and more answers passing" (431). Likewise, the Dormouse in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* tells a story of three sisters who live at the bottom of a well and learn to draw.

> "They were learning to draw," the Dormouse went on, yawning and rubbing its eyes, for it was getting very sleepy; "and they drew all manner of things—everything that begins with an M—"
> "Why with an M?" said Alice.
> "Why not?" said the March Hare.[13]

Indeed. And this is not so capricious as it might sound. In Stein's text, movement from the letter "L" to the letter "M" signals that elucidation will proceed by means of series in place of substitutive procedures. Rather than maintain its privileged place framing examples, explanation becomes

a term in a protracted series of words beginning with "ex-" that spans the entire text. Words that might ordinarily be secondary order terms such as "explanation," "example," and "explain" become members in a series including, among many others, "examination," "excess" (431), "excellent" (432), "excited," "expedition" (433), "extra" (435), "extraneous" (436), and "expect" (441). Clearly, the text progresses simply by adding more terms to the developing series: "He was as if he were going to pass an examination" (431). Although the speaker continues to give "examples," when these are members of a series they are no longer examples in any ordinary sense. Likewise, once "explanation" is a member both of the subheading series and the series of words beginning with "ex-" it loses its proprietary place and ceases to establish logical progression. These two series have a flattening effect on the text; the hierarchical structure of explanation has been replaced with a shallow, spreading surface of multiple series.

What does the series of "ex-" allow us to see? For one thing, placing the words "explanation" and "example" in series with the word "expedition" poses a question about the relation between understanding and knowledge implied in metaphors commonly associated with explanation. Is explanation a purposeful journey? "An elucidation is a journey to and for" Stein writes (433). "How did you get from here to there?" we ask when puzzled by the logic of someone's explanation, but is this the optimal metaphor for explanation, and what does it suggest about knowledge? Might we be deceiving ourselves that there is ever an arrival? In Stein's text, there are no rest stops in the paradigmatic forms of explanation; any rhetorical form including invitation, introduction, elucidation, and explanation can itself become an example.

Once it becomes a member of multiple series, explanation ceases to assign "place" to examples. In a play on a familiar homily, Stein exposes the dual operation by which explanation ordinarily both "places" examples and takes their "place," that is replaces the particularity of examples.

> Place. In a place,
>
> A place for everything and everything in its place.
> In place in place of everything, in a place. (431)

With considerable irony, Stein observes that explanation amounts to a shell game of sorts, depending as it does on substitution: "To explain I will explain. To take the place to take the place of this. In that way" (440–1). Examples in this text do not yield their "places," instead examples and expla-

nations are equivalent terms in distributed series.[14] Or, alternately, examples are all too willing to trade places: a subheading of the text re-emerges later as an example, and examples return as subheadings. Either way, examples have ceased to function as the vehicles of a second order explanation. Even deictic parts of speech (there, this) become the subject of sentences when they too remain "in place": "*There* is an excellent example and now I will explain away" and "*This* is a good example a very good example or an example" (432 and 433, emphasis added). A fair part of the difficulty of Stein's text is that the alternative she presents is bound up in the critique of conventional explanation. The doubling senses of "I will explain away," for example, suggest on one hand that conventional explanation is reductive, it displaces or replaces particulars, and, on the other hand, explanation may be exculpatory, it "explains away" misdeeds. Then again, "I will explain away," is the method of Stein's alternative in which explanation, unmoored from fixed boundaries, is a potentially endless activity.

Place is a mobile category in "An Elucidation" in much the same way that Alice must shift places in the table setting along with the rest at the Hatter's tea-party: "the March Hare moved into the Dormouse's place, and Alice rather unwillingly took the place of the March Hare."[15] Place refuses to remain *in place* in Stein's text because there are no fixed originating and concluding points, and because the word "place" shifts between abstract and concrete senses. Whereas in conventional explanation the "places" of explanation refer to the logical progression of statements, in Stein's text sequence has become entirely nominal, a matter of the shifting places of moving parts: "A third part is added to the top and bottom and the middle part is added in between" (434).

The opening pages effectively replace substitution with addition as Stein simultaneously tests the role of addition in conventional explanation and adapts it as a chief strategy of the text. She begins by exploring the speaker's position when offering an explanation and the potential emotional investments implied by explanation. Reading on, the example of the difference between "halve rivers and harbors" which I have claimed acts as a proxy for defining elucidation by distinguishing it from explanation, next becomes an instance for the speaker to illustrate various rhetorical positions involved in elucidation:

> I refuse have rivers and harbors I have refused. I do refuse have rivers and harbors. I receive halve rivers and harbors, I accept halve rivers and harbors.
>
> I have elucidated the pretence of halve rivers and harbors and the acceptation of halve rivers and harbors. (430)

Since Stein does not grant any reasons for refusing, receiving, or accepting "halve rivers and harbors," the phrasing sounds out the possible emotional investments for a speaker offering an elucidation. Setting aside the determination of states of affairs or outcome, she asks whether refusal and/or acceptance are implicit operations in the practice of elucidation. Must we accept certain premises or precepts and refuse others? And what is implied in the rhetorical stance of giving examples? "I will give other examples to you. I will give the same example to you and to you" (431). By repeating this idiomatic expression, Stein explores the implied contract that explanation somehow involves donation and that a listener may be reasonably frustrated if she doesn't receive the explanation. Of course we are not at a loss for examples in Stein's text; in fact, as I have suggested, the perpetual addition of further examples that are not posed as "examples of" something is one of the text's chief strategies. When Stein staunchly announces, "In this way I have made every one understand arithmetic," we realize that in these opening pages she has systematically tested what part aggregation and division play in the practice of elucidation: first through division (halve/have), next in terms of giving (receiving or refusing), and finally, through the continual addition of examples (432–33). In offering more examples, Stein merely abstracts and exaggerates the rhetorical stance of *giving examples* and explores how addition or aggregation relates to explanation: "We have mainly added to that" (433). While disrupting the hierarchical relation of percept to explanation, Stein explores whether addition and division are somehow fundamental to the practice of explanation and whether this might be revealed and obstructed by flooding the text with further examples.

Anyone might protest that explanation is precisely what we are *not given* in this curious text, and here I want to return to Stein's baffling assertion that she has explained when by any conventional measure she has not. Explanation in Stein's text is always on the brink of occurring, or has just occurred, but never *takes place*. The speaker often refers to explanation as either a past or future event, or in gerunds that suggest explanation, although continuous, is somehow never accomplished.

> I explain wording and painting and sealing and closing. I explain opening and reasoning and rolling, I was just rolling. What did he say. He said I was not mistaken and yet I had not when he was not prepared for an explanation I had not begun explaining. (434)

We can see that several compositional properties of the text contribute to this ineffable or elusive effect: the word "explanation" initiates a

series in which it is itself a member (explanation is neither a primary nor concluding term); as equivalent terms, examples and explanation generate series that extend in any direction throughout the text (the "unidirection of good sense" does not hold); without the resting points of arrival explanation is in constant movement; and, instead of the displacements of hierarchical order, "place" operates as a mobile point variously relating the terms example, explanation, and elucidation. As a result of the many types of reversals and the distribution of textual "places" explanation loses its capacity to replace particular examples with higher order claims and becomes instead an event of the text, unfolding as discrete examples multiply, splinter, and recombine. As such, it does not cease to begin: "To begin now" (434).

But what should we make of Stein's insistence that she has explained? I suggest that we approach the question by considering two apparently contradictory possibilities. The first is that Stein truly is explaining, only that in failing to recognize its radical nature we have missed the explanation. The second possibility is that in her repeated assertions that she will explain or has explained, Stein is playfully mocking the practice of conventional explanation which purports to explain but merely initiates an infinite regression of interdependent propositions. To ask, as Stein repeatedly does in the composition of this period, "what do you mean" triggers a linked regression of significations and denotations that will not ground the sense of the proposition (*Portraits And Prayers* 194 and *As Fine As Melanctha* 248). The question can now be re-examined: where *in language* is meaning conveyed, where does it "take place," and how is meaning imparted from one person to another? Is the singularity of terms lost in explanation: what do you mean by *that*? Does elucidation actually explain or is it simply "added to *that*," thereby initiating new lines on which meaning or connection might travel? (SR 433, emphasis added)

Reading in Series: Stein, Deleuze, and *The Logic of Sense*

Let me begin by taking up the second possibility first. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze claims that the three relations typically identified within the proposition—denotation, manifestation, and signification—form a circular logic insofar as each depends for completion on the others.[16] Denotation consists in reference, relating the proposition to an external

state of affairs, and representation, associating words with images. The logical criterion for denotation is true or false, namely that the denotation is filled or not filled by the selected image. From the perspective of speech (*parole*), denotation depends upon manifestation, the "desires and beliefs" of a speaker or writer that correspond to the proposition. Desires and beliefs are causal inferences that relate an image to belief in anticipation of the existence of the object. Linguistic analysis reveals the primacy of manifestation (the most basic being "I"), that is, a speaker or writer qualifies how a proposition refers to something. The logical criterion for denotation (true or false) is subsumed by that of manifestation which concerns veracity and illusion. Manifestation and denotation, in turn, depend upon how meanings are assigned and therefore on signification which is not complete without denotation. Insofar as it relates the word to "*universal* or *general* concepts" signification introduces an infinite regression of propositions. As Deleuze explains, "[f]rom the standpoint of signification, we always consider the elements of the proposition as 'signifying' conceptual implications capable of referring to other propositions, which serve as premises of the first."[17] Signification is the indirect process of deriving the implications of a concept from a proposition which is regarded "either as premise or as conclusion."[18] Yet again, Deleuze qualifies that from the standpoint of speech, manifestation is primary to both denotation and signification, but from the perspective of language (*langue*), propositions may "signif[y] concepts before manifesting a subject" and therefore concepts such as the world or the self are primary in relation to the person or designated objects.[19] This realm of signification affords consistency through the constancy of the signified concept.

According to Deleuze, we come full circle when we attempt to assert the primacy of signification over denotation: "[w]hen we say 'therefore,' when we consider a proposition as concluded, we make it the object of an assertion." But as Deleuze observes, doing so requires filling two conditions: first, that we deem the premises true, which entails departing from the "pure order of implication" in order to check the premise against a state of affairs; second, assuming the premises prove true, we now require yet another proposition to affirm that the first is true if the premises are true. This proposition remains "within the order of implication, and is unable to escape it" since its reference is to yet another proposition that affirms that the first is true if . . . and so on. Signification will not ground denotation "except by giving itself a ready-made denotation, once in the premises and again in the conclusion."[20] We begin to appreciate Stein's assertion

that she has explained as an ironic deflation of the authoritative tone of conventional explanation in presenting conclusions when, as we have seen, signification which "presupposes an irreducible denotation" fails to serve as the foundation for determining truth or meaning.[21] Stein suggests that explanation may amount to providing a rationale for sequence or causality: "To explain means to give a reason for in order" (433).

In recognizing the "circularity of ground and grounded" triggered by signification, we become aware of the limitations of a logical model conditioned by representation, and the epistemological basis for the wish to break out of this circle. Whereas of denotation we say it is true or false (filled or not), signification establishes the conditions of truth, that is, "the possibility for the proposition to be true." There are many forms of possibility including logical, mathematical, or transcendental, but all involve a conditioning of the given: "by whatever manner one defines form, it is an odd procedure since it involves rising from the conditioned to the condition, in order to think of the condition as the simple possibility of the conditioned."[22] There is no reason to suppose that whatever is denoted is affected by the logical operation performed. According to Deleuze, in order to break out of this circle we would need to introduce a fourth dimension of the proposition, "*something unconditioned*" which he calls sense and distinguishes from signification.[23]

Now we come to the other possibility I suggested above, namely that Stein is making sense when she claims to explain only not in the way we have learned to expect. As I will demonstrate in analysis of the landscape plays, Stein's elucidation imitates the relational formation of landscape in that explanation is "simply there" as a compositional effect and nowhere at once. Deleuze claims that sense is curiously ineffable because of its peculiar relation to language. Sense is the "*expressed of the proposition*" and as such it is a hybrid formation, a matter of language, including the expression of time sense, and also a matter of the attributes of things or states of affairs.[24] Sense has this odd elusive effect because it is not reducible to either pole: neither word nor thing, but the "articulation of their difference."[25]

> Let us consider the complex status of sense or of that which is expressed. On the one hand, it does not exist outside the proposition which expresses it; what is expressed does not exist outside its expression. This is why we cannot say that sense exists, but rather that it inheres or subsists. On the other hand, it does not merge at all with the proposition, for it has an objective (*objectité*) which is quite distinct.[26]

Finding that none of the modes of the proposition—manifestation, denotation, and signification—serves as a ground for meaning, Deleuze splits the proposition into two dimensions, denotation and expression. Sense is "neutral" to the modalities of the proposition and is released or emerges through maintaining the difference between expressive and denotative dimensions. What is presupposed in distinguishing the expression of a proposition? Sense is not rendered by the three modes of the proposition because it entails a dynamic process that lies outside or beyond the determination and categorization introduced by these modes. We mustn't mistake sense in this account for linguistic meaning lest we simply reintroduce signification. Rather, for Deleuze, sense is a register of value or of the relative intensity of the expressive potential of verbs and attributes as these enter a distribution or field. Here a painterly analogy is useful, and I will return to the visual analogy in more detail when I discuss the landscape plays. If one thinks of the color modulation in a late Cézanne landscape painting, by analogy sense is a marker of the relative intensity of the color swatches which seem to advance or recede depending upon relative value. That the color of a particular brush stroke or swatch is green or blue would matter to denotation but not to sense which is a register of its effect in relation to the adjoining color.

Likewise, in "An Elucidation," when Stein gaily announces that she has explained ("I have explained that") she calls attention to the presentational force of her explanation (433). Making sense proceeds independently of predicate logic and the corresponding modes of the proposition determined for subjects and by positive determination (For whom/What is/True or False/Negation). According to Deleuze, sense is indifferent or neutral to these aspects of the proposition: "Sense is strictly the same for propositions which are opposed from the point of view of quality, quantity, relation, or modality. For all of these points of view affect denotation and the diverse aspects of its actualization or fulfillment in a state of affairs. But they do not affect either sense or expression."[27]

In brief exercises of "An Elucidation," we find Stein testing various modes of the proposition in their relation to explanation. In a short series, she explores how the sense expressed by a proposition relates to the sequence or order of its constituent terms.

> Extra gum.
> Gum extra.
> Extra gum.
> An extra gum. (435)

Although we must use signification to follow the expression of sense in this example (the meaning of the concept "extra"), sense is not signification. What is at issue is something other than a determination as to whether there was more gum than needed.[28] Again, sense is not linguistic meaning, but a dynamic effect produced by sustaining the difference between properties of language (its expressive capacity to attribute) and of things (whatever is attributed to things or states of affairs). In this instance, Stein tests the effects of varying the linguistic proposition simply by altering the sequence of the terms. Does the order ("Extra gum/Gum extra") convey differing sense and why? Is it because the sequence affects denotation or is it because of differences in the expression of the linguistic statement? In the first example, "extra" is an adjective, and "gum" is a noun, and it would appear to remain so even when the phrase is reordered "Gum extra" although the word "gum" has now moved to the "place" of an adjective in conventional syntactic patterns. Stein analyzes how much the sense of the propositions depends upon terms assuming their "places" in conventional syntax and whether sense might yet refer to things ("gum") without limiting its expression to contexts we might imagine for denotation. These examples release sense, an expressive dimension that presses us to consider the operations of linguistic properties rather than read for signification, and this aspect of the text conforms to Stein's tendency to emphasize the capacity of language to speak without a speaker. In addition, her use of the word "extra" in this short example draws "extra" into the series of words that begin with "ex," which as we have seen is itself a series designed to disrupt the operation of sequence in explanation and the relative "places" of examples and explanation. Stein closes this subheading by rehearsing her analysis to this point of the hierarchical practices of explanation: "Do you all understand practice and precept./Do you all understand principal and secondary" (435–6). Having completed this series, she signals that making sense can continuously begin again with the subheading, "More beginning" (436).

Under the subheading, "Another Example" we find yet another exercise testing the properties of explanation in a long column that abstracts the expression of affirmation or negation. The following is an excerpt of a near-page long column:

I think I won't
I think I will
I think I will

I think I won't.
I think I won't
I think I will
I think I will (436)

With this passage, Stein resumes testing whether explanation concerns willingness, namely the willingness to give examples. On one level, it expresses the speaker's willingness to give another example (will she or won't she?) and on another, the testing of affirmation and negation is yet another example in the ongoing critique of explanation. Clearly, these are not categorical statements and determination is not at issue. Stein demonstrates that making sense is indifferent to the affirmation or negation of the statement, and concludes the list with the humorous announcement, "This is a good example if you do not abuse it" (437). By this point, we understand that "This" can only have been a good example in the metadiscursive way I have outlined, and that in turn this statement becomes a member of the series of examples crossing the text.

Taking stock of Stein's method, we might say that in making sense of elucidation what emerges is a set of stances expressed as infinitives including: to reject, to accept, to give, to bestow, to divide, to affirm, to settle, and to see. Making sense of explanation transpires as subtle relations form and shift among these potential infinitives, through the conjugation and disjunction of multiple series distributing these possibilities, and as a measure of relative intensity rather than determination. Giving or accepting increases as rejecting decreases in relative intensity. As I have suggested, the method of the text is accumulative, and it is a productive aggregation, not a reduction by abstraction: "How to combine all this together to make more" (438). Establishing differences does not settle the question, rather it leads to more relations as white and black considered in relation form a checkerboard:

A settled explanation.

I know the difference between white marble and black marble. White and black marble make a checker board and I never mention either.
Either of them you know very well that I may have said no. (436)

Readers cannot be faulted for feeling that the ground has fallen away since this is a major strategy of the text, but to protest that Stein's method simply isn't explanation is to miss her critique of conventional explanation

which, as we have seen, is not on firmer ground so long as it establishes an infinite regress of propositions or the circularity of ground and grounded. Where sense does not depend upon determination and predicate logic, it has an unsettling effect on personal identity. The pun on "places" that so unseats the procedures of explanation seems also to cause the speaker to lose her place, and "An Elucidation" becomes still "[c]uriouser and curiouser" as Alice says.[29] "Again search for me," Stein asks in a bid that initiates a series of questions revealing her uncertainty that she can be found in any ordinary way: "She looked for me at me" and the anxious-sounding "I never do see that I never do see you do see me" (431, 433). In this phrasing, we may hear an echo of an idiomatic expression commonly associated with explanation (*Do you see what I mean?*), but it also appears that when elucidation transpires in the multiple series of the text, its action undercuts the determination of personal identity.

The speaker's uncertainty may remind readers of the peculiar way in which Alice loses her way and her proper name in *Alice's Adventures*, "which way, which way?" she asks eating the small cake that will make her grow either smaller or larger.[30] Indeed, many of the reversals Deleuze identifies in *Alice's Adventures* will be familiar to us from "An Elucidation."

> Hence the reversals which constitute Alice's adventures: the reversal of becoming larger and becoming smaller – "which way, which way?" asks Alice, sensing that it is always in both directions at the same time, so that for once she stays the same, through an optical illusion; the reversal of the day before and the day after, the present always being eluded – "jam tomorrow and jam yesterday – but never jam *to-day*"; the reversal of more and less: five nights are five times hotter than a single one, "but they must be five times as cold for the same reason"; the reversal of passive and active: "do cats eat bats?" is as good as "do bats eat cats?"; the reversal of cause and effect: to be punished before having committed a fault, to cry before having pricked oneself, to serve before having divided up the servings.[31]

There are similar reversals at work in Stein's text: the reversal of passive and active ("I refuse have rivers and harbors" and "I accept halve rivers and harbors"); the reversal of cause and effect ("She is in and out"); the reversal of the day before and the day after ("yesterday was nearly seventeen days earlier than to-day"); the reversal of more and less ("We do very often,/An explanation of not at all"); and the affirmation of both directions at once in multiple series that cross the text (430, 431, 434, 433).

These odd reversals reveal that accepting "have rivers and harbors" is as good as rejecting them because determination is not the issue. It is the properties of language that have carried us here, far beyond the outposts of good sense, and we must recognize that a different ontology than that presupposed by rationalism is at work. According to Deleuze, rationalist thought presumes the unidirectional movement of good sense, from the present moment to the next (future), and from states of greater differentiation to lesser. With this directionality in place, thought concerns prediction: we determine what is possible and likely always with the assumption of moving from states of greater differentiation to those yet to be differentiated in future. Good sense determines directionality and its principle presses us to choose one direction rather than imagine that movement or sense might occur in two directions at once.[32]

Reading the method of Stein's text, we can see that she has set aside the assumptions of a representational theory of knowledge for an empiricist model. That sense should emerge as the expression of the variation produced in a series, or as the modulation in intensity of relations, corresponds to an empiricist claim concerning the nature of experience and of the relation of language to experience. In place of a representational model that requires the determination of subjects and objects and where language reports after the fact, Stein's text presupposes an empiricist model of incessant flux in which "what happens" requires the expressive potential of language. This is a philosophical claim that experience cannot be limited to representation insofar as its forms restrict what can be known to what can be so represented. Explanation in Stein's text is a dynamic unfolding of further connections, an extension rather than a restatement, and any point of determination is accompanied by indetermination. To register change or express sense requires a dynamic measure, a valuation of the relative intensity of various expressions as these come into contact. As Deleuze claims, "[i]t is language which fixes the limits (the moment, for example, at which the excess begins), but it is language as well which transcends the limits and restores them to the infinite equivalence of an unlimited becoming."[33]

Surely this helps to explain why we have missed the explanation in "An Elucidation." Stein demonstrates that conventional explanation treats understanding as if it occurred *elsewhere* other than in the immediate terms of its statement, and *otherwise* in some other organization or synthesis of component examples. In her alternative, she transforms explanation into an event of composition by appropriating the conventional operations of

examples, understood to be discrete instances, limited to and identical to their own propositions. With these singular, non-substitutable terms she makes explanation a matter of the shifting metonymic relations and quirky connections between equivalent terms distributed in series. Explanation becomes a matter of "what happens" in composition, not a restatement of prior understanding, "putting it in other words."[34] Making sense has the irreducible aspect of objects and of landscape that exists ("it is there" Stein asserts without needing to be recognized) because it is a matter of what the individual proposition expresses (LIA 263).

> An example of an event.
> If it is an event just by itself is there a question.
> Tulips is there a question.
> Pets is there a question.
> Furs is there a question.
> Folds is there a question.
> Is there anything in question. (SR 438)

This reformulation of explanation is the fruit of Stein's landscape writing in which she sought to impart a quality of immanence, of suspension or hovering in the spatial dimension of the text. In the space opened or imparted by means of compositional totality, elements in composition hold their places and are momentarily instantiated, as would "an event just by itself" (438). The implications for knowledge if it is conceived as a spatial rather than a temporal process are many. The elements that comprise the elucidation are simultaneous, rather than successive and therefore, elements may bear on others with surprising consequences. Elucidation consists in the transitions between and among elements rather than in the "resting places" of higher order statements and therefore explanation is an event that transpires in the spatial dimension of composition. Entirely dependent on the terms in circulation, elucidation has become an investigation in which the speaker does not know the outcome in advance. Explanation can be such an event if it unfolds as a matter of lateral relations rather than substitutions. We are carried along in "stretches": "Do you believe in stretches, stretches of time stretches of scenery and stretches of thirds" (435). Understanding the elucidation of the text means tracing the cataphoric and anaphoric directions of its language use in order to trace the multiple series crossing the text and the connections among them.[35] Anaphoric is a Latin derivation from the Greek *anapherein*, to

bring back (*ana-* + *pherein*, to carry), and indeed, Stein playfully explores the anaphoric motion associated with explanation.

> Did I say explanations mean across and across and carry. Carry me across. (436)

In a string of experiments with the landscape homology, Stein came to conceive of epistemology in spatial terms, treating knowledge as a process of holding open or suspending a space in which connections can form. Indeed, in her lectures Stein frequently refers to "knowing" instead of "knowledge" (LIA 250). Making sense then is a matter of making connections while allowing for the possibility that connections can be variously made: "If you connect them do you connect them./In this way" (SR 434). The speaker advises, "Small examples are preferable," presumably because they can be variously linked (434).

This stance has curious consequences for time sense and makes singular demands on our reading practices. Explanation elides the present moment; it never "takes place," but it also never ceases to begin. Elements of the text, instantiated as examples and variously connected to others in multiple series, emerge and are suspended in a space of simultaneity. We fail to locate the explanation at any particular juncture of Stein's text; certainly we don't read to the end for a conclusion. Neither is elucidation a reductive abstraction we perform from the particular elements of the text. In "An Elucidation," making sense doesn't proceed or exist in an ordinary way; it is *what happens across the surface of composition*. In this we detect the influence of Stein's experiments from her earliest plays onward to "make the play the essence of what happened" (LIA 261). Explanation, like a play, should be compositional expression rather than the record of a prepared argument. As I have suggested in discussion of "An Elucidation," we trace the elucidation of the text by identifying its compositional problem and by focusing on the compositional elements or structures that characterize the text, including the curiously elusive aspect of elucidation, the proliferation of examples ("I have a great many examples very often"), and the speaker's insistence that she has explained (SR 433).

We can begin to grasp the implications for knowledge if we are self-reflective about the particular demands the text makes for readers. Once we recognize the complex network of series that cross the text we find that we must read at two registers simultaneously. The first is movement from example to example along the series of the composition, with the

understanding that individual examples do not displace others. Although examples extend outward in lateral connections, each statement is discrete, each sentence is "sent once" as Stein writes elsewhere.[36] The second procedure is to read for compositional totality, rereading to trace connections across the text among its elements, and among multiple series. While we can disentangle the stages of reading as if they were discrete procedures, in the composition of the text these registers are synchronous and inseparable events. Connections among elements within and among series create a compositional totality that allows Stein to convey the activity of "knowing," that is, ineffable and instantaneous apprehension, yet without it "taking place."

An important implication of "composition as explanation," is that the composition both structures and solves the problem it formulates. "An Elucidation" is an investigation of what the practice of explanation entails if it is construed as a compositional event rather than the record of an event. The compositional field takes shape by means of circulating examples, that is, testing the premises of explanation by reiterating the singularities involved: *example, explanation, elucidation*.

Despite Stein's qualifications about the limits of understanding, this meditation on explanation ends in affirmation.

> I lead to Yes you do. You lead to yes you do, we lead to yes you do they lead to yes you do.
>
> Yes you do otherwise understood. Otherwise understood. Yes you do. We understand you undertake to overthrow our undertaking. We understand you do understand that we will understand it correctly. Correctly and incorrectly, prepare and prepared, patiently and to prepare, to be prepared and to be particularly not particularly prepared. Do prepare to say Portraits and Prayers, do prepare to say that you have prepared portraits and prayers and that you prepare and that I prepare.
>
> Yes you do.
>
> Organisers.
>
> Yes you do.
>
> Organisation.
>
> Yes you do and you, you do.
>
> To portraits and to prayers.
>
> Yes you do. (442)

We are prevented from reading the closing lines as a simple summary or conclusion when we remember that "Yes you do" was promised from

the outset as the final example: "Yes you do. Yes you do is the longest example and will come at the end" (432). Stein has written the ending in advance, it is "prepared."[37] If, at the close, we are prompted to say "yes" to the work, "to portraits and to prayers," our affirmation of the work has already been foretold. What are we to make of this? In fact, these closing lines are charged; Stein, who liked to think up collection titles, had long planned to use "Portraits and Prayers" for the title of a volume of work.[38] It was the title she gave a 1934 collection in which "An Elucidation" is the closing piece. Rather neatly, "Yes you do" comes both at the end of the piece and of the collection.

The lines elaborating "Yes you do" echo with potential resonance including an allusion to a cryptogram Stein was fond of writing, "We understand you undertake to overthrow our undertaking," in which the pronouns appear "under" or "over" the other words.[39] As such it is yet another rendition of the literal "places" of words in propositions.

stand	take	to	taking
we	you	throw	our

The phrase "Yes you do" seems to anticipate the potential response to the present work, "We understand you do understand that we will understand it correctly" (442). Or, perhaps "Yes you do" signals a willingness to "say Portraits and Prayers" (442). The reiteration of the phrase along with variants renders the pronoun ambiguous: does "you" refer to the speaker or to the reader?

Efforts to read the closing lines as a resolution of the text can lead readers astray. Instead, the closing lines continue the compositional method of serialization: the closing affirmation is yet another example that Stein leads the reader to as foretold. It sends us back over the text looking for the series that would include this example as a member. Now perhaps we notice that there is a series that classifies examples including, "the best example of all," "a very good example," and "small examples" (432, 433, 434). As "the longest example" the phrase "Yes you do" is the final member of this series and therefore retains its singularity as a compositional event.

Yet it makes little sense to deny the obvious—with this final example the text leaves us with a profound sense of affirmation. As an example, "Yes you do" may well be "otherwise understood" or variously connected to other examples (442). For instance, the phrase is also a member of a series

that concerns doing, "How do you do," "Do you do it," and "How do I do it" (441). But regardless of its status as example and its participation in more than one series, the phrase registers a resounding *yes*. This quality of affirmation results from the role of difference in Stein's method of making sense and her handling of time sense. The examples in the text have a peculiarly ineffable aspect because difference is not used categorically to sort the difference between positive representations. In large part, Stein's ability to formulate an epistemology that is not based on representational ideals depends upon the role she grants difference in the text. Constrained by mimetic practices, a representational model employs the concept of difference negatively, that is, to establish the difference between copies and simulacra. Its focus is on what can be positively outlined, the representation rather than the activity of representing.[40] By contrast, a compositional model of making sense casts an entirely different role for the concept of difference. In a field of non-exchangeable elements, difference ceases to be solely utilitarian, construed as delineating or defining positive representations. As Deleuze has observed, the expression of "difference in itself" is profoundly affirmative.[41] When difference emerges as a positive concept rather than as an operation of representation, it imparts a sense of affirmation because of its unique relation to determination. Differences between things are empirical, but to think of difference in itself is to imagine a state of affairs in which something distinguishes *itself* rather than being distinguished from other things or from a ground. This requires understanding difference as determination rather than an instrumental operation of determination, and in Deleuze's formulation requires that we examine our language practices: "We must then say that difference is made, or makes itself, as in the expression 'make the difference'."[42] When Stein creates a composition of equivalent elements in "An Elucidation" she blocks the conventional role of difference to establish instrumental differences between elements. Explanation will no longer entail comparative practices nor will it be a summing up. When explanation is instead a quality that emerges from composition, its expression releases the affirmation associated with positive difference, or as Stein asks: "If it is an event just by itself is there a question" (438). Stein's ability to create a space in which "knowing" might transpire as an event, releasing profound affirmation, accounts for the tremendous exuberance and hilarity of the text.

"An Elucidation" models the operations of explanation not because we have granted Stein, like Humpty Dumpty, the freedom to make the word "explanation" mean whatever she says it does. Her explanation (of expla-

nation) is baffling or unrecognizable as explanation because it proceeds on a non-rationalist basis by testing the contribution of language practices at every juncture. Stein's experiment in "An Elucidation" is to explain without fulfilling the expectations of a predicate logic, that is, without explaining *for*, or giving examples *of*, and without arriving at conclusions. The result is a perpetual testing of the relations presupposed or established in conventional explanation, relations between explanation and example, between sequence and order, and in the emotional relations associated with explanation, including such states as giving, reaching, satisfying, and concluding. I am proposing that we might retain the strangeness of Stein's experiment by adapting our approach to her radical epistemological stance. Even the objects of study will be unfamiliar as we shift our focus from the subjects and objects of representation to the relations that constitute composition and to an inductive and paratactic analysis of the series linking successive texts. Stein's work during these years presses us to examine the transitive relations generated by an emphasis on parts of speech including prepositions, articles, and modifiers that point without fixing reference and suggest dynamic movement rather than specifying states of being. In her texts, language articulates meanings without restriction to the grammars that typically impart speaking roles and describe the objects of experience. Her language practices open onto a pre-predicate realm in which objects are not predicated for subjects in accordance with a transcendentalist synthesis of subjects and objects. Language, as Stein so ably shows, can be used to explore its own expressive capacities, and this is not so hermetic as it may sound since it is by means of such exploration that it becomes possible to envision extending human capabilities beyond present limits.

The autonomy Stein discovers in language practice should alert us to the radical empiricist stance of her work. I have already introduced Deleuze's philosophy of language so as to describe the expressive dimension that emerges when language articulates the difference between attribution and attribute, word and thing. It remains for me to explain more fully why an empiricist emphasis on relations and construction makes it possible to construe a pre-predicate realm and for this I will need to distinguish between radical empiricism and rationalism. By identifying Stein's philosophical stance we do something more than merely classify her as a radical empiricist, although I think this is the case; we reveal the philosophical underpinnings of our own critical approach and become aware of the formidable barriers to setting aside rationalist premises.

Relations in Radical Empiricism

We will first have to dispel the textbook definition of empiricism, the claim that all knowledge originates in and is derived from experience. It is a poor caricature that reduces empiricism to knowledge claims concerning the experience of sense data.[43] Empiricism focuses on experience not in order to treat sense data as primary, but to stipulate that dynamic processes of association are equally real and directly experienced as sense data in the flux of pure experience. This is to replace a representational theory of knowledge with a functional theory: in the incessant flux of sensation, particular terms are perpetually displaced by others, and the function of an experience is to lead to yet another.[44] The pluralism and constructivism of the empiricist model are perhaps most clear in contrast to the copy model of representation.

Rationalism regards the objects of thought as representations and assumes mimetic correspondence between the objects of experience and their representation. The positive determination of objects required presumes a mimetic relation in which we conceive of objects (whether or not they so exist) in a state of being that is mirrored conceptually in their classification and representation in thought. On a Kantian model, the impressions of perception are synthesized by means of categories into experience, and therefore, the unity of consciousness guarantees the unity of the object. As James notes, if it is transcendental, the "agreement" of our ideas and reality cannot be verified by means of empirical experience, since it "belongs to another dimension from that of either facts or fact-relations."[45] Experience cannot bolster explanation because it is contradictory, whereas truth is rationally consistent.[46] But while the truth of our ideas "has nothing to do with our experiences" and "makes no difference to reality itself," nonetheless it has an oddly stultifying effect on reality.[47] According to James, the reality that can be so represented is static and immutable: "Reality stands complete and ready-made from all eternity, rationalism insists."[48] Although it presumes a mimetic agreement of objects and representation, James finds rationalism incompatible with a pluralistic world; it is a "meager" system compared to the richness of the "colossal universe of concrete facts."[49] Insofar as rationalism "starts with wholes and universals," it fails to correspond to reality, "The actual universe is a thing wide open, but rationalism makes systems, and systems must be closed."[50] The logical coherence of predication depends upon the positive determination of objects in fixed physical states, including dif-

ferentiation by kind. James objects to the reifying effects of this sorting: "Permanent 'things' again; the 'same' thing and its various 'appearances' and 'alterations'; the different 'kinds' of thing; with the 'kind' used finally as a 'predicate,' of which the thing remains the subject'—what a straightening of the tangle of our experience's immediate flux and sensible variety does this list of terms suggest!"[51]

Empiricism differs fundamentally from transcendentalism in that it does not begin with wholes (the Self, the World, the subject) but with parts, that is, with "pure impressions" from the given (the "flux of the sensible, a collection of impressions and images") and with principles of human nature which exert selective and constitutive roles.[52] However, James faults Hume for atomizing the given through an emphasis on the disjunction of parts: "Now, ordinary empiricism, in spite of the fact that conjunctive and disjunctive relations present themselves as being fully coordinate parts of experience, has always shown a tendency to do away with the connections of things, and to insist most on the disjunctions."[53] James claims that Kant reiterates this error, and he finds it richly ironic that rationalism, which first discounts conjunctive relations in order to emphasize disjunction in the determination of subjects and objects, is obliged to add in cohesion after the fact in the form of transcendental concepts.[54] Therefore, James distinguishes his radical empiricism by drawing a contrast to British empiricism and insisting "that the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves."[55]

The processes of association somewhat mysteriously practiced by the mind in a traditional empiricism become fully objects of study in James' radical empiricism, directly experienced, embodied, and as real as the elements of sense data. In asserting that relations are real, James affirms the constructed nature of reality. He proposes that all things, including mental and physical experiences, occur within a perpetual flux of *pure experience*, an undifferentiated flux of sensations that exists prior to the imposition of conceptual categories. It is "pure" in its potential, "a *that* which is not yet any definite *what*, tho ready to be all sorts of whats."[56] Whereas sensation is imposed on us, "what we say about reality" depends upon the selective and creative activity by which we shape the "field of sensation" and by which we arrange and classify our notions of intrinsic relations.[57] James asserts that all concepts, even those of space and time, are constructed rather than given categories. In his lectures on pragmatism and radical empiricism as he had earlier in his text, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890),

James treats language practices as a critical part of this construction. As soon as we receive impressions of the flux of sensation, we begin to ascribe it emphasis, identifying and abstracting parts from the flow.

But why should our conception of experience be restricted to what can be so represented? In James's account, grammar and syntax that emphasize determination and predication reinforce the habit of ascribing distinctions and disjunctions. James suggests that language reflects the flow of sensation in its transitive relations but that we tend to ignore this in favor of language practice that fixes substantives and their predicative states: "Prepositions, copulas, and conjunctions, 'is,' 'isn't,' 'then,' 'before,' 'in,' 'on,' 'beside,' 'between,' 'next,' 'like,' 'unlike,' 'as,' 'but,' flower out of the stream of pure experience, the stream of concretes or the sensational stream, as naturally as nouns and adjectives do, and they melt into it again as fluidly when we apply them to a new portion of the stream."[58] In fact, James suspects that the British empiricists' emphasis on disjunction is a reflection not of experience, but of language practices: "Distinguishing its elements and parts, [the reflective intellect] gives them separate names, and what it disjoins it cannot easily put together."[59] There would be no need to impose transcendental concepts in order to guarantee rational coherence if only empiricism had been sufficiently radical and recognized conjunctive as well as disjunctive relations: "*Radical empiricism*, as I understand it, *does full justice to conjunctive relations.*"[60] To begin theoretically with parts puts pressure on the relations between parts, and relations are the transitions among ideas by means of which we form tendencies. Or as Deleuze explains, "We start with atomic parts but these atomic parts have transitions, passages, 'tendencies,' which circulate from one to another."[61] These transitions result from the conjunctions formed by ideas of relation.

"What is a relation?" Deleuze asks in his essay on Hume. "It is what makes us pass from a given impression or idea to the idea of something that is not presently given. For example, I think of something 'similar' . . . When I see a picture of Peter, I think of Peter, who isn't there."[62] Relations have generally been classed as internal, meaning that changes of relations necessarily result in changes to the terms, or external, whereby changes in relations may occur without change to the terms involved. It would seem that certain relations, such as spatial relations could well be external to the ideas involved, whereas changes in other relations, such as resemblance, contrariety, or quantity, would seem to depend more essentially on the ideas compared so that changes in their relations would necessarily result in changes to the ideas. But in a highly original reading of

Hume's empiricism, Deleuze discovers a new logic in his emphasis on the exteriority of relations, "an autonomous logic of relations" that displaces the predicate logic of rationalism.[63] Taking as his example the relation proposed by the statement, "Peter is smaller than Paul," Deleuze claims that rationalism mistakenly reduces the "paradox of relations," by making the relation internal to the terms or formulating a more comprehensive term to which the relation may be subsumed.[64] Rationalism asks, "How can we make of this relation something internal to Peter, or to Paul, or to their concept, or to the whole they form, or to the Idea in which they participate?"[65] On the contrary, Deleuze finds in Hume that "[e]very relation is external to its terms" whether the terms are "matters of fact" or ideas.[66] Peter and Paul are not changed by the relation, since these terms are ideas, neither will properties of Peter and Paul explain how we form the relation itself. Or, to return to the earlier example, when on seeing a picture of Peter we think of him in his absence, we "would look in vain in the given term for the reason for this passage."[67]

Relations must have other causes than the properties of ideas they join.[68] It is hard to imagine how relations can be explained on the basis of observation of the physical world or the representational matrix (idea/object). That we observe distant or contiguous objects does not explain the relations we form of distance and contiguity *as relations.* In the mind, these observations are impressions of spatial composition, but "under what influence" Deleuze asks, which the mind itself must also undergo, do distance and contiguity become relations?[69] Similarly, comparing two particular ideas on the basis of resemblance yields an example of resemblance but it does not account for the origin or operation of resemblance as a relation: "The resemblance between particular ideas doesn't explain that resemblance is a relation, that is, that an idea can evoke the appearance of a similar idea in the mind."[70] The properties of ideas do not explain the nature of operations we may bring to bear on them, including the relations we might establish among ideas. Furthermore, the relation may vary without the terms varying. According to Hume, "relations are the *effect* of the principles of association," contiguity, resemblance, and causality.[71] But as Deleuze notes, while these principles of association make all relations possible, "each particular relation is not in the least explained by the association."[72] For example, the relation of contiguity does not explain why *this* idea evoked *that*.

We can now recognize why Deleuze finds the theory of exteriority in Hume so exhilarating. According to Deleuze, in asserting that relations do not derive from the nature of things and are not caused by the ideas

involved, Hume invents an autonomous logic of relations. Relations by means of which one idea introduces another are not qualities of the idea, a matter of something intrinsic to the terms involved or to existing ideas, but qualities of the human mind at work, constituting relations through association. With the logic of relations empiricism introduces a new power, that of conjunctions that may overrun or subvert the primacy of predicate forms: "Thinking *with* AND, instead of thinking IS, instead of thinking *for* IS: empiricism has never had another secret."[73] For Deleuze, an autonomous logic of relations makes possible encounters with something other, with an "Outside" that has not already been conditioned for the subject in conformation with the determination of representation. Beyond the world of experience demarcated by subjects and objects lies a pre-predicative plane or a "zone of indetermination," an unconditioned flux of existence that exceeds the identities determined by predication.[74] The empiricist seeks to sustain an experiential relation to this realm of indetermination by tracing the relations among and between terms, and following sense as it transpires in startling conjunctions, unexpected turns, leaps, and extended mappings.

"Thinking *with* AND, instead of thinking IS" means radically restaging our inquiry concerning what counts as meaning, and how we understand its determination. If we are to trace the intensity of dynamic movement in a text—what Deleuze called "something which happens,"[75] and Stein called "the essence of what happened"—we must find methods to do so without reducing this process to a change in the terms involved and without reinstating the familiar states of things (LIA 261). Ceasing to ask the questions of predication and representation (*what is X*, *who is X*, *for whom*, *to whom*) we want to identify and trace an expressive dimension in Stein's experiments that confounds denotation and signification, that splits their difference, and that engages novelty in a way we cannot have anticipated and cannot paraphrase. As I have been suggesting, Stein's experiments with a spatial homology prepare the way for her to treat knowledge as though it required a spatial dimension in which events transpire and connections multiply among compositional relations. In the following chapters, I will show that we can trace this epistemology as it develops, beginning in experiments with love poetry and in successive experiments with framing devices as she modeled plays on landscape. If we can shift to reading in series, both the series that constitute a particular text and the series of successive texts that comprise a compositional task, then in place of representation we can analyze the expressive dimension that emerges in

the texts. In the landscape plays and in the burst of portraiture that these experiments inspired we want to read with an understanding that Stein is *making sense* and allow that her experiments confound our expectations for meaning.

Notes

1. Dates of composition are according to Ulla Dydo's account in *The Language That Rises*, 61, n11 as well as the headnote to "An Elucidation" in *SR* 429–430.
2. Dydo, *The Language That Rises,* 62 and 47.
3. Later, in *ABT* Stein described "An Elucidation" as "her first effort to state her problems of expression and her attempts to answer them. It was her first effort to realize clearly just what her writing meant and why it was as it was," 209. Preliminary titles of "An Elucidation" suggest that the text is expository: according to Dydo, the first title was "Halve Rivers and Harbors" with "Elucidation" as subtitle, but Stein next changed the title to "An Elucidation of Style" and then to "An Elucidation of My Style" before arriving at the final title, "An Elucidation," *The Language That Rises,* 63 n.14.
4. Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (New York: MacMillan, 1920), 106.
5. Edith Sitwell, who lectured regularly to promote her own work, acknowledged her role in the arrangements for Stein's lectures in her autobiography: "It was at my invitation that [Stein] came to England later on to lecture in this country," *Taken Care Of* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1965), 136. See Dydo, for an account of Sitwell's "campaign to promote" Stein and her persistence despite Stein's initial refusal of the invitation to lecture, in *The Language That Rises,* 78–81.
6. Harold Acton, from *Memoirs of an Aesthete*, quoted in Janet Hobhouse, *Everybody Who Was Anybody* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1975), 115–6.
7. What bears explaining is why her contemporaries should recognize Stein's work since "it is perfectly simple that there is no reason why the contemporaries should see, because it would not make any difference as they lead their lives in the new composition anyway," SR 496. Stein's answer is that WWI intervened and forced a "contem-

porary recognition," SR 501. On the role of war in Stein's writing see John Whittier-Ferguson, "The Liberation of Gertrude Stein: War and Writing," *Modernism/modernity* 8, no. 3 (2001): 405–428.

8. The "age demanded" is Pound's phrase from his poem, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley." See Sharon J. Kirsch's analysis of the rhetorical strategies Stein employed in a later lecture, "The Gradual Making Of The Making Of Americans." Kirsch argues that Stein made masterful and deliberate use of rhetorical and public relations strategies on her 1934–35 lecture tour, "Gertrude Stein Delivers," *Rhetoric Review* 31, no. 3 (2012): 254–270.
9. Dydo, headnote to "An Elucidation," *SR* 430. If "An Elucidation" was written while Stein anticipated critical response to *Geography And Plays*, it was not as "an answer" to actual critical reviews since the piece was well underway by the time reviews of *Geography And Plays* began to appear, *The Language That Rises*, 58. Other potential occasions for explanation include Stein's influence on young writers "eager for instruction" such as Hemingway, and the prospects of submitting *The Making Of Americans* for publication, *The Language That Rises*, 58 and 62. Dydo also cites other texts written in the early 1920s as studies in "literary problems of language, genre, method and organization" including "Practice Of Oratory," "Studies In Conversation," *A List*, and "Procession" in *The Language That Rises,* 44.
10. As I show, to interpret "Halve rivers and harbors," we must read across the composition to find that the phrase becomes one of many examples testing the operations of elucidation by putting these into practice. But for Dydo faint traces of a loving dedication to Toklas that appears on the cover of the *cahier* (and therefore may refer to the piece "Lily Life" also included in the *cahier*) decides the matter. The inscription reads "To the little river/for/me and for you," and Dydo concludes: "the word 'river' and the phrase 'Halve [have] Rivers and Harbors' suddenly become simple, idiomatic, and literally true," *The Language That Rises*, 52. We may take it as a given that Stein's love for Toklas underwrites all her work, but what do we gain by claiming, as Dydo does, that "[l]oving and writing collapse into one" in this piece? When we so fix the meaning of a phrase with biographical context (and material that was not published) we cease to examine what it comes to mean in the composition.

11. Much like the series purportedly distinguishing between explanation and elucidation that traverse "An Elucidation," Deleuze has written *The Logic of Sense* as a series of series ("a series of paradoxes") so that he complicates the determination of "events" with multiple approaches, 12. *The Logic of Sense* develops as Deleuze interrogates "a category of very special things: events, pure events" through a series of synonyms crossing the text: *events, surface-effects, event-effects,* 1 and passim.
12. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 76.
13. Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* 109.
14. The notion of creating an equivalent sign in place of mimetic representation of sensation had great currency in accounts of avant-garde painting in the first decade of the twentieth century. See Pepe Karmel for the derivation of this idea from nineteenth-century empiricism, which stressed active construction of perception over passive reception, and the Symbolist emphasis on the sign in *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 6–7 and 19. For example, in "De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au Classicisme" published in *L'Occident* in May 1909, Maurice Denis wrote that "the emotions or spiritual states caused by any spectacle bring to the imagination of the artist symbols or plastic equivalents. These are capable of reproducing emotions or states of the spirit without it being necessary to provide the *copy* of the initial spectacle." Cited in Karmel, 7 and in Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 105.
15. Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* 108.
16. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 12–18.
17. Ibid., 14.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 15.
20. Ibid., 16.
21. Ibid., 18.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 19.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 24.
26. Ibid., 21.
27. Ibid., 20.

28. Although the company was founded in 1891, the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company did not introduce the "Extra gum" sugar-free brand until 1984.
29. Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* 15.
30. Ibid.,13.
31. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 3.
32. Ibid., 76–77.
33. Ibid., 3.
34. William Lundell, "Gertrude Stein: A Radio Interview," *Paris Review*, 85–97. In the interview, Stein contested Lundell's definition: "You mean by understanding that you can talk about it in the way that you have the habit of talking . . . putting it in other words . . . but I mean by understanding enjoyment."
35. See Peter Quartermain's analysis of the anaphoric and cataphoric language use in Stein's *Tender Buttons* in *Disjunctive Poetics,* 24–29 and 43.
36. Of the many instances of this pun in Stein's writing, see "Sentence sent once patriarchal poetry sentence sent once" in "Patriarchal Poetry," *Bee Time Vine And Other Pieces [1913–27]*, Volume Three of the Yale Edition of the *Unpublished Writings of Gertrude Stein* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 271. Subsequently cited in text as BTV.
37. Dydo observes that Stein prepared in advance for the example "Yes you do" to end the text. She notes that "Yes You Do" is the title of another text Stein wrote at about the same time as "An Elucidation" in *The Language That Rises*, 58–59.
38. Stein began playing with the phrase "Portraits and Prayers" as a provisional title for a volume of work after her use of the phrase in "An Elucidation." She refers to a "volume of Portraits and Prayers" in a letter to Carl Van Vechten postmarked July 6, 1923 in *The Letters of GS and CVV, 1913–1946*, Vol. 1: 80. See also Dydo, *The Language That Rises,* 60–61, n10.
39. Stein claims it is the "only cryptogram that I could ever do" in *Everybody's Autobiography* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1937), 290. Subsequently cited as EA in the text. Sutherland cites this cryptogram as an example of "devices for insisting on the reality of the work" in *Gertrude Stein: A Biography of Her Work*, 79.
40. I am indebted to Charles Altieri's article, "Can We Be Historical Ever? Some Hopes for a Dialectical Model of Historical Self-

Consciousness," in which he outlines a model of historical analysis that is not shaped by Renaissance representational ideals, *Modern Language Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (March 1993): 41–54. For his purposes, Altieri recasts an aesthetic discussion of Cézanne—one underscoring the "antinomy between representations and representing"— to develop a theory of history in which we can "change our notions of what counts as historical knowledge," 48. Freed of the obligation to display mastery, art might reveal the "inchoate"—whatever cannot be given positive representation—along with all the signs of the activity of representing. Likewise, we need a model for Stein's work that allows us to discuss features such as movement, stillness, spatial dimension, and tone that are resistant to paraphrase or, in Stein's phrase, understanding that consists in "putting it in other words," *Paris Review*, 85–97.

41. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994; original 1968), 54–5. Deleuze claims "difference is affirmation" and explains: "This proposition, however, means many things: that difference is an object of affirmation; that affirmation itself is multiple; that it is creation but also that it must be created, as affirming difference, as being difference in itself," 55.
42. Ibid., 28.
43. According to Deleuze, knowledge claims have not been primary for empiricism, and experience does not have the "univocal and constitutive aspect" it would require "to define empiricism as a theory according to which knowledge derives from experience," *Empiricism and Subjectivity*: *An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991; original 1953), 107–108.
44. William James, "A World of Pure Experience," *Writings 1902–1910*, 1170.
45. James, "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth," Lecture VI of *Pragmatism* in *Writings 1902–1910*, 585.
46. James, "The Thing and Its Relations," Appendix A to "A Pluralistic Universe," *Writings 1902–1910*, 785.
47. James, "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth," in *Writings 1902–1910*, 585.
48. Ibid.

49. James, "The Present Dilemma in Philosophy," Lecture I of *Pragmatism* in *Writings 1902–1910*, 496.
50. Ibid., 498.
51. James, "Pragmatism and Common Sense," Lecture V of *Pragmatism* in *Writings 1902–1910,* 564.
52. Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, 87.
53. James, "A World of Pure Experience," *Writings 1902–1910*, 1160. See also James's critique of Hume in *A Pluralistic Universe*, *Writings 1902–1910*, 787.
54. James, "A World of Pure Experience," *Writings 1902–1910*, 1161.
55. James, *The Meaning of Truth: A Sequel to "Pragmatism."* In *Writings 1902–1910,* 826. See also James's discussion of radical empiricism in "A World of Pure Experience," 1160–64.
56. James, "The Thing and Its Relations," *Writings 1902–1910*, 782–3.
57. James, "Pragmatism and Humanism," Lecture VII of *Pragmatism*, *Writings 1902–1910*, 594.
58. James, "The Thing and Its Relations," *Writings 1902–1910*, 783.
59. Ibid., 782.
60. James, "A World of Pure Experience," *Writings 1902–1910*, 1161.
61. Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, 107.
62. Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life,* trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001; original 1995), 38.
63. Deleuze, *Pure Immanence,* 39.
64. Ibid., 37.
65. Ibid.
66. Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, 99.
67. Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 39.
68. Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, 98.
69. Ibid., 99.
70. Ibid., 100.
71. Ibid., 100.
72. Ibid., 103.
73. Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 57.
74. Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 173.
75. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II,* 51.

CHAPTER 2

Taking Place in Love Poems

"Often the end of one picture is the beginning of the next," Leo Stein, Gertrude's brother, wrote disparagingly of Picasso.[1] Because Stein, like Picasso, worked in a series of formal experimentation, we must look to preceding texts to pick up the thread if we want to understand how the landscape homology emerges in Stein's work, and why a spatial solution was so generative. Read out of context, changes in style often seem abrupt in Stein's texts, but new styles don't emerge fully formed in her work. The most telling context is the writing itself: new methods directed to ongoing compositional tasks draw on methods of previous texts, and Stein was extraordinarily able to redeploy earlier strategies to new effect. Reading in sequence and across genre, we detect the terms and strategies of the compositional experiment that links a series of texts and in which the landscape plays participate. We can then derail our expectations of subject or genre conventions by treating each text as explanation of a particular aspect of the compositional task at hand.

During the early 1920s, Stein formulates the compositional task concerning emotion and time by examining *place* and *placing* both figuratively and in operation, and these words recur in sequential texts with clever and often-humorous shifts in context and sense. As we saw in "An Elucidation," the idiomatic expression "[a] place for everything and everything in its place," reiterated with many variations ("[t]o take the place to take the place of this"), formed a part of Stein's methodical undermining

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of the substitutive practices of explanation (*SR* 431, 440). We can, in turn, situate "An Elucidation" *in its place* in a broader investigation when we recognize that there are many variations on this idiomatic expression in the preceding texts. This string of texts, which includes some pieces that are formally similar and others that are quite dissimilar, is therefore linked in a shared experiment concerning the illusionism by which things "take place" in representation by means of the displacements of conventional explanation, narration, and love poetry. The senses of "places" are much elaborated in the two love poems I will discuss in this chapter as well as in intervening texts. In "A Sonatina Followed By Another" (1921), the speaker asks, "can we place that treasure" (*BTV* 21), while "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You," a piece Stein wrote in Paris early in 1922 before her visit to Provence, is a "history of places" that includes the bold assertion, "I place you" (*AFAM* 228). In a subsequent text, the speaker in "American Biography" (1922) claims, "I satisfy all the places. In place of this place me" (*UK* 163).

By tracking the reiteration of this phrasing, we come to the surprising discovery that Stein's interest in "places" began before her stay in the landscape of Provence. If we expected that the landscape homology implied description of a particular place, it would be disarming to find the word "place" so often repeated in texts of the preceding year. But as we will see, the landscape plays do not describe locales even when cities are named or the word "place" appears, and the reiteration of this phrasing reveals her efforts to bring elements into spatial relation in composition. In my view, Stein was "prepared" (a word that also runs throughout texts of these years) to see landscape as a homology for composition because her experiments with textual "places" resulted in spatial qualities that anticipate those of her landscape plays.[2] In the love poems, multiple series displace ordinal sequence and evoke a spatial dimension that might be traversed or mapped through the complex ramification of "arrangements" (*BTV* 10). Although Stein would later theorize that the landscape homology for plays began during her stay in St.-Rémy from late summer 1922 to spring of the following year, it is evident that several compositional strategies carry over from the love poems to "An Elucidation" and to the landscape plays. Stein's endeavor to replace representation with direct expression in "A Sonatina" becomes the starting basis for experiments with equivalence in "An Elucidation" and the landscape plays. And in "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You," her disruption of chronological time in "the history of places" anticipates the time sense of her first landscape play, an odd confla-

tion of immediacy and duration. When we read the texts in their places as members of a protracted series, we recognize that the landscape plays are merely the next step, albeit a pronounced one, in a string of experiments whereby Stein methodically tests the premises and the practices by which things "take place."

Perhaps it will come as no surprise that Stein's critical appraisal of plays should stem from her experiments with love poetry. For if "the problem of time in relation to emotion" is a "problem with plays," it is most assuredly a problem of the love poem as well (*LIA* 251). But what is surprising, reading the landscape plays in series with the preceding and intervening texts, is to discover a correlation in Stein's formulation of intimacy and knowledge. As we will see, this association has significant implications for the new style of portraiture that results from the landscape writing. In these rather long and seemingly digressive love poems, Stein examines whether aspects of intimacy might be analyzed on a compositional basis, disrupting the reifying operations of love poetry that would place the lovers in a chronological account. Rather than recount a history, she treats making choices, a commonplace aspect of intimacy, as though it were a compositional activity, and explores whether it might be modeled on open-ended textual exchanges. Having read ahead we can recognize this strategy deployed in "An Elucidation" where multiple exchanges among examples overrun the constraints of conventional explanation. "A Sonatina" is not a record of lovers who have chosen one another, but a poem that explores intimacy as an activity of perpetually making choices such that choosing itself emerges as a pleasure. In a text composed of such varied and abundant choices, evidently the particular choices are not at issue. Instead, by means of a deceptively simple strategy, the poem suggests that present-day choices are pleasures at least in part because the activity of choosing rehearses the original act of choosing one another. Both in this poem and in "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You," Stein attempts to write the love poem not as summary or recollection, but such that intimacy is rendered as an ongoing expression.

These linked experiments reveal that Stein treats intimacy and knowing as activities that structure experiences of time and space. Composition becomes the site in which she might examine the complex temporality associated with intimacy and with knowledge. Taking nothing about these concepts for granted, she analyzes both as constitutive practices involving perpetual arrangements and selection rather than as the product or outcome of such activities. Where the choices are mainly among pleasures,

the activity of choosing may not seem to present so radical a disruption to conventional love poetry, but when Stein renders intimacy a dynamic activity, a matter of continuous choosing, she immerses choice in a far more vast and uncertain realm of contingency than conventional representation typically allows.

Making Arrangements in the Love Poem: "A Sonatina Followed By Another" (1921)

Stein wrote "A Sonatina Followed By Another" in the spring of 1921 while staying in Vence in the Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur region of southeastern France. During the 1920s, Vence was a retreat for writers and painters. A popular resort now as it was then, Vence is a walled circle of medieval buildings where five *portes* or gateways give access to the old town and its Roman ruins. Writing "A Sonatina" in a landscape new to her, Stein opens the text to her surroundings and tells of the abundance of roses and lilacs, the success or failure of local crops, the changes in weather and to their diet: "Do we like corn bread" (*BTV* 8). In this poem, Stein regards written composition as construction and associates writing with curiosity about how things are made and how moving parts are joined.

> How can gaiters cover old shoes.
> How can rubber heels come off.
> How can oil be thick and thin.
> How can olives flower.
> And why don't figs. (*BTV* 6)

The form of Stein's persistent questions about intimacy mirrors this avid curiosity with how things work, linking her fascination with the mechanics of things to the mechanics of intimacy.

> How can you think of everything . . . (9)
> How can you easily please me you can do so very well . . . (9)
> How kindly you smile. (10)
> How can I thank you enough for all your kindness to me. (10)

The pleasures of the poem are many, but in readmitting looking at the world, Stein risks readmitting the mimetic practices of comparison and resemblance, namely, doubling ("Compare something else to something

else") and deferral that results in indirectness or error.[3] When comparison is the basis for representation, description will replace wonder at how things work, and the love poem will prove inadequate recompense for the beloved's simple generosity. This is the problem of the poem. Sexual intimacy, the "honeymoon at noon" of the poem, only makes the stakes more explicit: how can the poem be an equivalent of pleasure rather than representational, that is, "instruments that measure"? (22, 21) Or, as she would put it later when the novel was the form in question, the problem is how to write "[a] novel of thank you and not about it."[4] This wish that the love poem *be* a gift rather than a poem about one is a precursor to the equivalence of the landscape homology.

Apparently, visits to medieval cathedrals in Vence led Stein to consider how and why objects come to be treasured. Her questions about treasures prompt questions about how intimate pleasures are remembered and treasured.

> Treasure measure pleasure, whether it is a pleasure, whether it is a pleasure. Treasure measure, whether we consider the placing of the treasure, whether we consider that the treasure is whether we consider that the treasure is a pleasure. Measure, whether we consider that the treasure is a measure of a treasure, whether we treasure, whether we measure whether it is a pleasure. I remember with so much pleasure the crossing of the river. I remember with so much pleasure all the pleasure and all of the pleasure we had crossing the river. I remember the pleasure we had in looking at all the treasure that was made of steel and had to do with instruments that measure. I remember very well the pleasure when I recollect, when I recollect the treasure and can we place that treasure, can we replace that treasure can we place that treasure, whether we can place that treasure. I have decided to be sunburnt. (21)

Stein's questions are both humorous and apt. Why are things treasured after all? And why are treasures on display so often "instruments that measure" once these are no longer in use? Are things treasured in their own right (and what would this mean) or are treasures a measure of pleasure? The passage emphasizes activity, rather than objects: placing the treasure, crossing the river, and remembering. If treasure is a measure of pleasure, are these current or past pleasures? And how does a collection of such treasures differ from a person who "recollects" pleasure? (21) Stein suggests that both in the museum display and in memory remembering involves *placing* the treasure, an activity that she mirrors in the text where "place" or "replace" may refer to placing in memory and/or in the text.

Along with treasures there are medals. In the poem, Stein alludes to the *Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française*, "the decoration a grateful country gives you in recognition of your duty," an honor she and Toklas were awarded that year in recognition of their wartime service (10). But what is fitting tribute from a grateful "husband" for the beloved's generosity? In March of 1921, Stein's brother Leo married Nina Auzias, his girlfriend of many years. Long estranged from her brother, Stein did not attend his wedding, but his marriage may have prompted her to reflect upon her longstanding and officially unrecognized marriage to Alice Toklas. Certainly marriage is one of the many pleasures of the text, "When all is said it is very pleasant to be wedded" (30).[5]

Can the poem impart the directness of actual kindness? Can it be an equivalent of pleasure rather than its measure or record? The speaker's frustration with the limits of symbolic representation erupts in the mounting urgency of the poem's recurrent and unanswered question.

> How can I thank you enough for holding me on the ladder for allowing me to pick roses, for enjoying my fireside and for recollecting stars. How can I thank you enough for all your kindness to me. How can I thank you enough.
>
> If I could I would make this arrangement. (10)

Reading earlier texts we find that this persistent line of "How can I" questioning is an intertextual response to a "Can you" line of questioning posed in short poems of 1917 and 1918. This wording often puts the burden on the other: "Can You Behave Better," "Can You Call Us," "Can You See The Name."[6] Stein cautions that description entails error of a particular kind. In making resemblances we mistake one thing for another, and she distinguishes these kinds of comparisons and substitutions from material exchanges. The "many exchanges" of one of these poems "Can You Sit In A Tree" (1918) anticipates the multiple "arrangements" of "A Sonatina."

> Do not mistake a white for a red.
>
> Or a woman for a man.
>
> Do not be in error.
>
> In this way many exchanges are made, we get an oiled coat and we prefer it. Such pretty color. Do you always believe in that. I believe in the woman of my choice. (*BTV* 209)

Stein suggests that making exchanges entails making choices, and that in this poem as in "A Sonatina," compositional practices might thereby be aligned with the practices of intimacy. As for mistakes, "A Sonatina" shows abundantly that intimacy admits of and forgives error; indeed, the speaker makes repeated bids to be loved along with her failings—the "medal" of honor becomes meddling in love poems of these years— but these are mistakes of a different kind (*AFAM* 233). For Stein, comparison or resemblance involved a strange doubling and mistaking of one thing for another: "We have been mistaken and I have been mistaken. We have not mistaken one thing for another thing" (BTV 23).

This brings us back to the desire for directness in the poem. Comparisons in conventional love poetry tend to fix intimacy as a stable object, a treasure, and, in place of direct expression, the poems are "instruments that measure" (21). Stein's alternative is a textual "sonatina," a composition of a series of arrangements: "If I could I would make this arrangement" (10). The poem opens with similarly worded questions that cross the text as though in imitation of chords or melodic refrains. To the series of questions phrased "How can you" or "How can I," Stein adds another series that asks "Do you admire gypsies," and "Do you really wear a chinese [*sic*] hat," while yet another strand asks "Can you reason with me," "Can you subsist on butter, oil and edibles and rosebuds and weddings," and "Can you quote speeches" (11, 5, 4, 17). Rhyme schemes are another type of refrain. A play on "address" begun with the line "Address me to number thirteen rue San Severin," next refers to loving addresses, "I address my caress," then resounds in a later series of rhymes: "my caresses to the one who blesses who blesses me" (5, 6). Rhyming "unexpected tenderness" with "canticles express" transforms religious songs of praise into tribute to the beloved, a "Song of Alice B." The religious canticle emerges later in the poem as erotic play, "Can tickle can tickle can tickle her for sin is said" (24).

To continue, Stein can merely add another "sonatina," and indeed, this is how Part II begins: "A sonatina followed by another. This ought to be the other./And it is" (16). A closer reading reveals that the "sonatina" is not the only formal arrangement of the poem: the musical analogy is itself merely one kind of arrangement within a larger set of arrangements. In the poem's opening lines the speaker lists the rhetorical forms the text will include: "Eighty pages of love and blandishment and small handwriting. And now a poem a conversation an address and a dialogue and a rebuttal" (4). Part II includes an architectural-sounding subheading,

"Annex To No. 2," (Radcliffe College when Stein attended was called the Harvard *Annex* and female students were called "Annex Girls"), followed by a series of letters signed by "August" husbands, and a final section that includes three subtitles designating "A Play."

If the problem of the poem is the adequacy of comparative measures why should the solution be a series of unanswered questions, or an "arrangement" of arrangements? By means of the questions that criss-cross "A Sonatina," Stein effectively dismantles the conventional union of vehicle and tenor, and with it the implicit equation that technical mastery represents the speaker's sincerity and devotion—as if depicting intimacy depended upon exacting verisimilitude or "getting it right." In Stein's poem, one series of questions continually probes the adequacy of expression, "How can I thank you enough," while another, distinct series conveys simple delight or wonder in the beloved, "How precious you are" and "How kindly you smile" (10). Because the sentiments expressed do not correspond as simple question and answer, one series cannot solve another, and therefore resolution of the compositional task, the adequate expression of devotion, will not represent or displace the sense of wonder in the beloved. Rejecting symbolic representation as both too fixed and indirect, she creates a random set of arrangements, multiplying the connections possible and blocking one-for-one substitution. The series that comprise the poem (its prolix arrangement of arrangements) circulate freely, maintaining their autonomy. In place of substitution, exchanges among the terms of a series as well as exchanges among the multiple series suggest that connections must be actively constructed and aggregate both terms and choices.

Mapping emerges as a metaphor for compositional procedures as it had during the teens when Stein and Toklas were often traveling to perform war service. We find oblique reference to mapping in "A Sonatina" where there is much mention of "Godiva," the name Stein gave their car, of driving, and of what appears to be a map of France inscribed with the large letter "F": "A great many numbers indicate the number of places to which we can go. A great many numbers have this to say. Go this way. A great many numbers have special sizes and under them there is a large F. Be so pleased to see for tea" (17). The word "followed" appears frequently, resonating with the compositional procedures of the poem where one sonatina "follows another," marriage ("follo**wed**"), and the maps that travelers follow. Whereas in "A Sonatina" Stein tests the word "measure" in reference to museum treasure and to measures in musical

arrangements, we find the word much in use in earlier texts related to travel. For example, in "Curtains Dream" (1921), the word *measure* refers to distances measured and traveled: "We measure and we measure and we tread that is Godiva does the distance" (*BTV* 224). And, in "The Work," (1917) a measure is again an "instrument that measure[s]," when it refers to the gauges of a car: "All the weights are measures./By this we mean we know how much oil we use for the machine" (*BTV* 189). Ultimately, Stein so compounds the senses of *measure* that it no longer refers simply to a device for comparison. This would seem to be the point: a measure is the activity of measuring, the instruments that measure, and what there is to measure. Given that certainty is often what there is to measure in love, and knowing Stein's fondness for corny puns, we should likely see the French word *mesure* (and read "me sure") in the spelling of the word "measure."

Through the compositional strategies of "A Sonatina," Stein attempts to write a poem that follows the vagaries of intimacy, the shifting grounds of pleasure itself. The poem explores the ways in which intimacy eludes conventional representation, and shows it to be more nearly compositional in form. Loving practices of the poem are chiefly rhetorical, interrogative, or declarative, and concerned to a large extent with practical arrangements, mutual solicitation, and choices. By employing the rhetorical practices of intimacy, including perpetual questions about comfort and satisfaction, Stein suggests that intimacy is itself a formal experiment, an ongoing, open-ended quest for adequate vehicles for intense and changing affect. In its many arrangements, the poem continually displays its formal choices *as choices*, and while it cannot ever be the material equivalent of intimate pleasures, in its procedures the poem imitates the occupation of love and one of its chief pleasures, that of actively *making* choices: "She had eyes and yellow shoes she had everything to choose and she chose me" (*BTV* 12).

In a string of subsequent texts, Stein explores the potential of writing, "measure for measure," using various forms of distribution including lists, arrangements, sequels, counting, and procession.[7] She thoroughly rehearses the implications of "following" for composition and intimacy: "A responsibility followed by another is plenty good enough" we read in "American Biography And Why Waste It" (*UK* 167). We begin to see anagrams we might have missed in "A Sonatina." A line from *Reread Another/A Play/To Be Played Indoors Or Out/ I Wish To Be A School*, "I have followed I have been followed I am followed by another," reveals

that the word "wed" is embedded in the word "follo**wed**" (*SR* 348). Stein eventually exhausts the method of sets of series. A series of brief biographical sketches, "An Instant Answer Or A Hundred Prominent Men," prompts the sequel, "A Singular Addition. A Sequel To An Instant Answer Or One Hundred Prominent Men," in which the anonymous men are "wedded" in what apparently was to have been one hundred weddings, except that Stein seems to have lost interest and stops abruptly: "The seventy-third marriage I am not going to expect any more" (*PL* 286). This of course suggests the limitations of non-ordinal succession as method; simply adding more terms may circumvent the one-to-one matching of comparison and symbolic substitution but it does not generate much compositional tension. "Added to what" begins "A Singular Addition" (*PL* 277).

For my purposes, however, we are rewarded for reading the texts in series when we find that Stein puts these questions concerning succession to new uses in the landscape plays. In the spatial dimension evoked in a text, does one thing "followed by another" suggest adding more elements or moving on? Could one somehow arrest the propellant motion implied by succession and render instead a procession that moves "in place" or that builds up through the accretion of layers? That is, as Stein discovered in experiments with non-ordinal series, if succession is not configured as temporal or linear progression, but as a spatial property, then she might create various spatial impressions including that of elements suspended on a depthless plane, of a horizontal plane to cross, or of a vertical plane in which scenes develop as if through the layering of pictorial relief effects.

What's more, reading in series from the love poems to the landscape plays, we begin to discern that mapping is a strategy of the texts as well as a metaphor for a broader commitment on Stein's part to create space for the expression of uncertainty and chance as forces of composition. Renewed looking in the love poem raises questions for Stein concerning the exercise of choice or will and its relation to chance. For early nineteenth-century scientists and philosophers, questions about perceptual experience were questions about how free—or how determined—perceptual experience is once transcendental guarantors of unity were discredited. Both James and Bergson conceptualized attention as a fundamental expression of human freedom.[8] If in Stein's poem, intimacy is a matter of actively making choices, ("She had everything to choose and she chose me"), choice is expressed in the exchanges of the text through its relation to chance. When "exchanges are made" in the text, choice and chance are equivalent

terms in composition. Inasmuch as terms implying determination such as *preparation* and *plan* recur in texts of these years, so too do those associated with happenstance including *accident* and *coincidence*. For if intimacy is to be expressed as a truly mutable activity, then chance elements must figure equally as events constitutive of composition with real potential to exert effects, otherwise the poem will merely describe particular choices. Mapping and making arrangements make it possible for "A Sonatina" to convey a wide and dynamic range of emotions associated with intimacy as compositional elements and determinants.

The History of Places: "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You" (1922)

For the most part, "A Sonatina" is a text composed of present time pleasures, and the strategies of the poem unfold in a compositional present. By her own admission, Stein did not "back up" well, either in her car or in composition (*ABT* 173).[9] As we have seen, "A Sonatina" forms by means of its daisy-chain questions as we travel across the text: "Back, we do not go back, but by a back we go across, we Godiva and Saint Christopher" (*BTV* 20). By means of these exchanges Stein imparts her wonder and gratitude with appealing directness, but what if she wants to convey a time sense other than the present, to tell "the history of wishes guessed expressed and gratified" as she puts it in "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You"? (*AFAM* 230) Despite Stein's objections to conventional forms of narrative and history—"And now to withstand history" she gaily announces in "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You"—she does not concede the capacities of either genre entirely (235). The challenge is how to impart the continuity over time that invests intimacy with shared meaning without merely telling a story, and thereby limiting the choices of a poem such as "A Sonatina" to conventions of narrative sequence and closure. This would appear to be a problem of time, or, as Stein asked elsewhere, "What was it somebody said that the only thing God could not do was to make a two year old mule in a minute" (*LIA* 287). And yet, surprisingly in "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You," the long love poem I consider next, Stein recasts this temporal problem in spatial terms. The way to recount the history of their affection will be to tell it as "the history of places" (*AFAM* 228).

We were clued to this solution toward the close of "A Sonatina" in the passage I quoted above in which a model of circulation and exchange might come to be an alternative to the fixity of treasure collections: "I

remember very well the pleasure when I recollect, when I recollect the treasure and can we place that treasure, can we replace that treasure can we place that treasure, whether we can place that treasure" (*BTV* 21). What does it mean for something to "take place" in the text? How is this different in kind than what happens when events "take place" in the physical world or when they are recollected in the mind?

Stein wrote "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You" at home in Paris early in 1922. The poem does not answer the title question nor clarify its allusion to Nelly and Lilly, but as we will see, reference need not be specified when repetition of this question renders it highly expressive. Although otherwise dissimilar in style, Stein tries a similar strategy in "Lifting Belly" (1915–17), an earlier love poem in which she also makes references without explanation. As the critic Peter Quartermain has observed, withholding "a preexistent narrative already known to the lovers" has the curious effect of heightening the impression of the poem's referentiality even as it renders "the precise nature of the reference irrelevant." [10] In this way the poem conveys a sense of the "highly personal world" the lovers share while protecting their privacy. We cannot interpret the poem by decoding the meaning of its title phrase. Instead, Quartermain concludes, "[t]he strategies of *Lifting Belly* force the reader to trust the situation of the telling, and thus to trust language patterns, the recurrences and variations, as manifesting the poem's coherence."[11] Likewise, while we can identify biographical references for Nelly and Lilly, doing so does not prove of much use for interpretation. In place of reference, we will need instead to analyze the compositional problem Stein addresses and the effects she creates by reiterating the title question so plentifully.

The occasions of the poem "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You" must have immediately posed challenges for Stein because they include retrospection—it is both an anniversary poem celebrating the couple's long union since Stein's marriage proposal in 1908, and a birthday poem for Alice with "Birthday greetings to my dear wife" (*AFAM* 226).[12] The compositional task of the poem is to recount a history of their affection in which the historical past will be vividly present. One way is to show that the past is never past when it persists in daily activity: "I have no sense of a pastime. Our pastime is to measure beds rather to measure beds" (231). Another is to somehow imitate in composition the ordinary processes by means of which memories acquire and retain meaningfulness over time, the "mixing" or interpenetration of events that occurs in memory and in the recounting of history.

> How can I mix summer with winter, this summer with this winter and this winter with that winter and that summer and that summer and this winter. And then we had a terrace there. How do you care how do you come to care here and there. Here and there I said here and there I said here and there. (227)

It is characteristic of the poem that Stein quickly transforms questions posed in terms of time (as here, seasons) into a matter of place. She draws on the commonplace practice of using a place to remember a time ("[a]nd then we had a terrace there") and suggests that a chief strategy of the poem will be to reproduce in composition the mixing of "here and there" that occurs in memory.

Stein will demonstrate that if memory might be recast as a matter of place, the "there" that is past may also be experienced in relation to the present time "here." This will require that she recount the story of the couple's courtship, and this she does plentifully, beginning the story again and again. "Part one" introduces a third-person account of Stein's marriage proposal to Toklas as though overheard *in media res*, "He said didn't Nelly and Lilly love you" (221). For reasons Stein does not explain, the title question appears to have served as preparation, and thought of preparation recalls the speaker to present-day preparations, "We are sending the wine and bringing the poem" (221). Signaling that her method will depend on quotation, Stein next alludes to a remark she credits to Benjamin Disraeli, the nineteenth-century British prime minister and writer, and that she will quote more fully later in the poem: "Climate and the affections. I have often been quoted as quoting that" (241). The remark is itself a quotation by Disraeli in one of his letters.[13] By means of punning, the quotation is drawn into the story of Stein's marriage proposal to Toklas on a hillside in Fiesole, Italy, on a hot summer day.

> Climb it.
> Climate.
> When he arose.
> Was it a rose it was a rose, was it a rose he arose and he said I know where it has led, it has led to changing a heel. We were on a hill and he was very still, he settled to come and tell whether, would he could he did he or should he, and would he, she wound around the town. She wound around the town and he was nervous. Can we ever. Can we ever, can we ever recognize the spot. (221)

Multiple story lines are begun, interrupted or simply discontinued and fail to securely position what Gérard Genette in his analysis of narrative discourse calls a "first narrative subject."[14] The temporal ordering of a narrative (the order that introduces a subject first) may be compared to the sequencing of events and segments of the story. The timeline of the story may be reconstituted despite narrative anachrony except, Genette qualifies, where "temporal reference is deliberately sabotaged" and this reconstitution seems pointless. (Genette's example is Robbe-Grillet.)[15] This of course is the case in Stein's poem. Rather than establishing the sequential events of the story within a stable narrative order, Stein creates a "multiplication *of beginnings*."[16] In the poem, the story of the couple's engagement is continually begun and deferred in the opening pages, first by the story of their origins (twice told), and then by a sequence of stories about their early meetings including the coincidence of their not having met when both lived in the San Francisco Bay Area as children. The text relates a brief biographical account of the lovers' family histories told first as a romantic fairytale, "Once upon a time when Poland had a capital and Washington was the capital of the United States there was born in Allegheny in the state of Pennsylvania the seventh child of a father and a mother" (222). The storyline is immediately waylaid by word choices that link this retrospective account to the present. Stein alludes to learning French and German as a young child in Europe: "And I I went back to the petted section of France Austria and arithmetic and I always forgot the languages which are related to their view" (222). Resuming her account of the proposal, she links these early efforts to learn language to the private shared language of the lovers: "She came and saw and seeing cried I am your bride. And I said. I understand the language. Don't Nelly and Lilly love you. Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you" (223).

Although they eventually met in Paris in 1907, Stein is fascinated by the "coincidence" that she and Toklas "never met" in California (223). An account of this coincidence includes yet another version of their family origins, this time told with terse realism, "Now actually what happened was this. She was born in California and he was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania" (223). We next get a hint of the story of their first meeting alone, "He was at home," but the tale of this meeting is deferred by a short account of the proposal meeting where Stein appears to have blurted "Don't Nelly and Lilly love you. And I remember that I did say it and I deny it and I say I said" (224). From this point, the narrative backtracks yet again to another event of the story, an account of initial introductions:

"We mentioned that we had intended to meet brother by brother and brother by brother. This meant no defeat for us or for another. This meant that our future would be for ourselves alone" (224–5). Following birthday wishes in the compositional present, Stein gives an account of Toklas' first visit to her alone at home at 27, rue de Fleurus that we recognize from biographical sources: "She came late I state that she came late and I said what was it that I said I said I am not accustomed to wait" (226).[17]

And so it continues. Stein pretends to introduce retrospective accounts or what Genette calls narrative *"analepsis,"* the presentation after the fact of events that occurred earlier in the story timeline.[18] But in Stein's poem we must ask, retrospective in relation to what? As Genette makes evident, narrative discourse is a structure of relationships; analepsis is retrospective in that it recounts "an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment."[19] When Stein sabotages chronological order and the sequence of narrative segments, she creates a pronounced gap between narrative and story, and exaggerates the narrative handling of the story. More specifically, Stein demonstrates what Genette describes as "narrative's capacity for *temporal autonomy*," by making it difficult to interpret the meaning of events in relation to narrative sequence or chronology.[20] Instead of returning to the narrative order established by the "first narrative subject" at the close of a digression or retrospective account, the text returns obsessively to the title question. In varying tones, alternately humorous, pathetic, querulous, or reassuring, Stein repeats the "same" question in each of different contexts, effectively making the poem a "history of places" in which she asked "Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you": during an early visit, on the walk where she proposed marriage, on subsequent summer holidays, and in the compositional present.

With the repetition of this question Stein asks why narrative can't impart shared history in the way that any ordinary remark repeated over years by two people acquires the status of quotation. The "history of places" turns out to be a history of this quotation because the question comes to serve as an achronological baseline of sorts, an "indispensable transfer point," Genette's term for the insomnia and *madeleine* scenes in Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*.[21] But with this important difference: repetition of the question doesn't establish a fixed referent point for the various storylines that, with some effort, can be rearranged chronologically. If we read by reestablishing chronology—and the poem has often been mined for biographical references—we have missed the point. By repeating the title question in multiple contexts, Stein foregrounds *how* this question became

meaningful, how it acquired the status of quotation, and why it continues to be elaborated. Repetition of the question allows her to separate duration—the fact that "love takes time"— from the logic implied in chronological succession, and this in turn makes it possible to convey the fullness of shared history with the immediacy of the present. "This is a history of a moment," as she writes in "As Fine As Melanctha," another text written in the same year (*AFAM* 255).

Here's how repetition of the title question works. Because it is so obsessively reiterated, we can't help but pose tentative hypotheses about the question as we read, and in doing so we repeat the poem's compositional method, that is, we actively explore how this linguistic event comes to be invested with shared meaning. In turn, this incessant and constructive activity becomes an analog for intimacy, here revealed to be an elucidating activity that imparts and elaborates shared meanings over time. Given the context, we initially construe the title question as "preparation" for the speaker's declaration of her affection and we speculate about its possible meanings in the context of the lovers' early meetings. Perhaps Stein inquired about former lovers if Toklas expressed reservations about a lesbian relationship, or demurred that she had never been loved. Interestingly, the poem doesn't answer this kind of historical question and biographical references won't fix the meaning of the question because the real issue is compositional—that is, *what happens* when the question recurs as it does in the poem. Evidently the question was asked at the time of proposal and subsequently quoted back over years: "She quotes this. Don't Nelly and Lilly love you" (224). Repetitions tease out its implications and varying tones.[22] At times, the speaker defends herself against teasing, "It was very well said. Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you" (224). Repetition of the phrase is clearly comical, "I did not say didn't Nelly and Lilly love you all day" (231). In other instances the quotation has sexual connotations: "Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you. I addressed this question when I wondered about arms and tears. And was I ever ridiculous. I am afraid I could merit chastity" (225).

Repetition of the question begins to have an odd effect. Because the question is a quotation, we often have trouble identifying its intended time frame in a particular instance. Is the speaker quoting herself by reporting a prior instance of the question, or is she voicing the question now, in the compositional present? We are reminded that we ordinarily establish narrative order solely on the basis of temporal markers in the text.

Continue.
We continue as above. (228)

Since it appears in each of several "places" of the text, the title question becomes an aleatory point, a functional member of multiple series unfolding in the text simultaneously. Skipping from one temporal domain to another, the question acts as a "paradoxical element," traversing the series and distinguishing some narrative lines as trajectories while splicing together others.[23] Meaning does not depend upon the chronological progression of the storyline relative to a fixed reference point ("next"), nor on causal links between successive events (the logic of "and then"). Instead, by virtue of this aleatory point, meaning forms and circulates in several temporalities at once and irrespective of sequential order, creating a compositional surface of potential interstitial connections. When the incremental time sense established by any of the several storylines is crossed by the title question, the speaker achieves a quality of continuity that bespeaks a shared past and is absolutely present: "Now then again. Now then and again. Now then and again and then now then again" (244).

I should clarify the allusion to Bergson in my use of the word "duration" earlier. I don't mean to imply the present saturated by the past with the kind of permeability and fluidity that has been interpreted in other modernisms as application of Bergson's *durée*. Stein's method emphasizes discontinuity: abrupt jump cuts from one time frame to another invite us to rethink both the relation of past to present and the process of recollection as a matter of place. We may imagine that the past begins when the present is displaced by another present. This is to think of present and past as discrete and ordinal units: each moment succeeding the next, taking its turn in the slot of the immediate before it becomes the past, fading out of range like the last car of a long train. But for Bergson, or at any rate, Deleuze's Bergson, the "most profound paradox of memory" is the contemporaneity of past and present. "The past and the present do not denote two successive moments, but two elements which coexist: One is the present, which does not cease to pass, and the other is the past, which does not cease to be but through which all presents pass."[24] Because of its strange status in the text the title question, "Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you" demonstrates how the past and present might be coextensive—all former instances of the question "pass through" this point when it is reiterated in the present. It isn't that the past is summoned by the present

event as recollection or that it is newly reconstituted in relation to the present, but that it is present *at the same time*. This is the paradox Deleuze identifies in Bergson's theory of memory: "The past is 'contemporaneous' with the present that it *has been*."[25]

Thinking of memory and time in this way raises an intriguing question, not *What* but *Where* is the past? When we make an effort to recollect, writes Bergson in *Matter and Memory*, "We become conscious of an act *sui generis* by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first in the past in general, then in a certain region of the past—a work of adjustment, something like the focusing of a camera."[26] In his interpretation, Deleuze cautions against an overly psychological reading of this *sui generis* act by which we displace ourselves. Before it is psychological, recollection entails an ontological leap; "we leap into the past as into a proper element."[27] For Bergson, as for Stein in this "history of places," recollection is a matter of placement, of imaginatively "going" to the place where the "past in general" exists (Deleuze says we must "search at the place where it is").[28] Recollection is first an ontological act, a leap to the "ontological regions of the past," and only secondarily a personal act in which we search among distinct regions for particular recollections. According to Deleuze, this entails an act of placing, "we only grasp the past at the place where it is in itself, and not in ourselves, in our present."[29] Likewise, Stein's method of recounting a history of their affection entails imaginatively revisiting the various places of their encounters by treating the word "place" as both verb and noun. She continually interrupts and diverts the storyline that would place the lovers securely in a history of their affection so that she can render the infinitives "to place" or "to take place" as ceaseless activities of the text. Ironically, Stein discovers how she might impart continuity and duration by refusing to allow things "to take place" with the finality of representational illusionism. Instead, reiterating the title question maintains the coextension of past and present and presents the continuity of shared history with the contingency of present experience.

What does this make of history? Once the speaker declares, "You did stay," bringing the storylines of courtship and marriage to a successful resolution, Stein abruptly turns her attention to the nature of history itself (227). Perhaps the force of history might be resisted by means of mutual consensus, interpretation, or invention: "History can rush along. And what do we do. /We agree you agree I agree and I agree. You agree we agree and I agree. I agree. You agree we agree I agree" (233). Indeed, as

the poem has shown, the history of their affection is a disputed and much elaborated present-day account that effectively recasts history as a matter of agreement rather than a stable and singular record of chronological events. Then again, perhaps history might be resisted if it were treated as a grammatical operation. "Can you decline history," the speaker asks, in a clever, punning line that compounds grammatical agreement (declension) with the possibility that one might simply choose to "decline" or refuse history (227). Could one "decline" a history and generate more histories in the way that a grammar makes more? This is in fact what happens in composition; Stein generates many more "histories," so that the "history of places" becomes but one in a series of histories, including the "history of a tear," "the history of his recollection," "[t]he history or histories of a birth place and traveling," and "the history of fire works" (227–9).

But who are Nelly and Lilly? Apparently, the original biographical reference has long ceased to matter, occluded by the rich set of associations the phrase has acquired, and the speaker archly jokes: "We haven't seen Nelly since then."

> He knew when he was occasionally repeating. He knew when he was occasionally repeating this he knew when he was occasionally repeating that. Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you. We haven't seen Nelly since then. Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you. We haven't seen Lilly since then.
>
> And now to withstand history. History has this meaning, it covers them and it uncovers them and it uncovers them and it covers them. Let me tell the history of letter paper.
>
> We were easily deceived by our intention of illustrating a rose by a rose. We were not easily deceived. (235)

Over the course of the poem, the words "Nelly" and "Lilly" cease to function strictly as proper names and begin to evoke a rhyming childhood jingle, as though suggesting there was never a time when the lovers did not address one another. Biographers have identified Eleanor (Nellie) Joseph and Lilyana (Lily Anne Elizabeth) Hansen, friends of Alice Toklas with whom she had "romantic attachments" when she lived in San Francisco.[30] In a circuitous way, Stein came to know something about the nature of these friendships before she and Toklas met for the first time in Paris. Stein borrowed the correspondence of friends for her typology of character, including letters Alice had written to Annette Rosenshine, a mutual friend.[31] Without doubt, the knowledge Stein gained of Toklas's

prior attachments by reading her letters gave her an advantage over the unsuspecting Toklas, as Shari Benstock speculates.[32] Asking by name about Alice's former friends on an early meeting Stein gives herself away, and the poem hints at the deception, "And now the real reason why when she wrote she never mentioned me" (225). In phrasing that hints at her own "cover up," Stein asserts that the meaning of history is in constant flux entailing as it does perpetual agreement, deception, and revision. If one history "uncovers" Nelly and Lilly, another, the "history of letter paper," that is, the history of the motto, "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose"[33] that Stein had printed on her stationary, "covers" the couple's life together since then.

> He knew when he was occasionally repeating. He knew when he was occasionally repeating this he knew when he was occasionally repeating that. Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you. We haven't seen Nelly since then. Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you. We haven't seen Lilly since then.
>
> And now to withstand history. History has this meaning, it covers them and it uncovers them and it uncovers them and it covers them. Let me tell the history of letter paper.
>
> We were easily deceived by our intention of illustrating a rose by a rose. We were not easily deceived. (235)

History can be withstood not only by observing that there are multiple histories, but by describing history as an action (un/covering) rather than an outcome. As Stein ably shows in the poem, the meaning of any phrase changes with repetition over time and in differing contexts, and she seeks to render the capacity of memory and history to revise in the love poem. That the phrase that signaled deception should become an affectionate tribute seems extraordinary, but Stein has modeled the strategies of the poem on the very ordinary capacities of language use as a part of a shared life.

No doubt I have belabored what will seem to some readers a slight text in Stein's body of work. Yet "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You" reveals that at this time in her life, she was eager to recount histories so long as she could find new forms to convey continuity, and the poem is an important development in addressing "the problem of time in relation to emotion." Because it is a love poem, the stakes in "Didn't Nelly And Lilly" are emotional: the challenge is to impart the continuity of shared experience that occurred over time with the immediacy of present discovery. Perhaps the

burst in Stein's productivity during her stay in St.-Rémy that follows on these love poems results from the happy insight that she could reframe problems of time sense such as these with the spatial homology to landscape. In her first landscape play, *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions*, the subject of my next chapter, Stein attempts to evoke a spatial dimension that will sustain the paradox of duration and immediacy, namely that landscape endures and precedes the viewer, and yet is grasped entirely and at once with the simultaneity of composition on view. Of course, problems of representation are challenges Stein returns to repeatedly over the long course of her writing, and she reprises certain methods. But strategies that recur are used in different periods of her writing with different aims, depending on the genre or experiment she addressed, and to different effect. I want to briefly underscore the gains of reading these texts in the sequence of composition.

These love poems pose two major challenges that Stein will explore during the early 1920s, and we find that strategies of the love poems are precursors for those she will develop in her experiments with plays. The first concerns problems of representation as these bear on the love poem. Stein wants to avoid the indirectness and deferrals of representation based on comparison and resemblance and instead write a love poem with the immediacy that makes the material world seem a present moment gift. The second challenge is how to render past and present as coextensive elements. Perhaps a sense of continuity is necessary in order to portray intimacy (love takes time), and yet Stein wants to convey that this continuity exists simultaneously with the present.[34] In both poems Stein counters the substitutive practices of representation with the equivalence of composition. In "A Sonatina," she explores how composition might evoke the constructed nature of experience and the contingency of intimacy. In the formal structures of composition could one somehow express a sense of curiosity and sheer wonder at the existence of things, their unique qualities, their joining to other things, and changes in their states? "How can oil be thick and thin" (*BTV* 6). Things, their attributes and purposes, are fixed in place in representation but not in experience. How might composition retain a sense of marvel at how things are made and the contingencies of perception? If it were possible then perhaps this expressive dimension of composition could, in turn, render intimacy not as "treasure" but as an activity. "If I could I would make this arrangement" (*BTV* 10).

These two love poems, and intervening texts, are linked in series with "An Elucidation" and the landscape plays by variants on the recurrent tagline "in its place." In these texts, Stein undermines the illusion that events "take place" in representation through the substitution and displacement of chronology or hierarchy. In a composition of equivalent terms, she demonstrates that any term that might fix order or establish directionality can itself be set in motion by inclusion in a series. "A sonatina" becomes one of many arrangements, and the "history of places" becomes one of many histories. When Stein creates multiple storylines that are crossed by the recurrent question, "Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you," she demonstrates that the same question has different meanings in different contexts, and imbues continuity with a sense of immediacy. Past and present are coextensive when one series crosses another, and history can be presented as a composition open to continual revision. Nothing "takes place" with the finality of representation, and Stein replaces chronology with the simultaneity of perpetual exchanges among elements. "I will trade you" (*AFAM* 203). The emphasis in the love poems on textual places and the extensive arrangements of series that crisscross the texts conveys an inkling of the spatial dimensions (the expansiveness and movement) that she will develop more fully in later texts of this period. In her experiments with landscape plays, Stein reformulates certain strategies of the love poems, including exchanges among equivalent elements, the use of series and multiple arrangements, and the impression of simultaneity.

Notes

1. Leo Stein, *Appreciation: Painting, Poetry and Prose* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 177.
2. For examples of the many uses of the words "prepare," "prepared," and "preparations" in texts of these years, see "Do you prepare that in that way," "Prepare to mistake means," and "You do not prepare and here and there," in "Why Are There Whites To Console" (*AFAM* 205, 208, 215); and "Now say to me I am prepared to be prepared" in "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You" (*AFAM* 243).
3. This line appears in "Patriarchal Poetry" (1926–27) where problems of description re-emerge. "How is it to be rest to be receiving rest to be how like it rest to be receiving to be like it. Compare something else to something else. To be rose./ Such a pretty

bird./ Not to such a pretty bird. Not to not to not to not to such a pretty bird" in *BTV* 257.

4. Gertrude Stein, *A Novel Of Thank You* (Normal, Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 1994; original 1958), 185.
5. Biographical reference to Leo's marriage is unmistakable in "A List," a play written during Stein's 1922–23 stay in St.-Rémy, which includes the line: "One may say that one may say that a brother tardily marries" (*SR* 411). According to biographers, Stein last met her brother Leo in 1920 after a six-year hiatus. See Linda Wagner-Martin, *"Favored Strangers": Gertrude Stein and Her Family* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 153.
6. The line "How can I thank you enough" also appears in earlier poems such as "Sacred Emily" which Stein wrote in 1913 and would have reviewed in 1922 for inclusion in *G&P*.
7. See "Lily Life" (1923), also written in St-.Rémy which continues the method of arrangements, "Manifestly I desire to arrange and to have it all arranged," and concern about connections: "Join water with wells. Join respect with regret. Join knives with embroidery. Join lambs with stables and also join pieces with corners. Care to see me" in *PL* 132–33.
8. Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999), 42.
9. "Wrong or right, said Gertrude Stein, we are going on. She could not back the car very successfully and indeed I may say even to this day when she can drive any kind of a car anywhere she still does not back a car very well. She goes forward admirably, she does not go backwards successfully," *ABT* 173.
10. Peter Quartermain, *Disjunctive Poetics,* 30.
11. Ibid.
12. Alice Babette Toklas was born in San Francisco, California, on April 30, 1877; in 1922, she was forty-five years old. Based on textual word play and correspondence, Dydo speculates that the Stein-Toklas anniversary was in early May. As Dydo notes, subsequent texts also pair the birthday and anniversary, including "A Lyrical Opera /Made By Two/ To Be Sung," composed in 1928 for Toklas's fifty-first birthday, and "Birth And Marriage" (1924), see *The Language That Rises*, 227.

13. Disraeli closes a letter of July 23, 1860, to Mrs. Brydges Willyams with the remark, "Lady Ebury said to me the other night that she lived only for climate and the affections," in *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, ed. W.F. Monypenny and George Earle Buckle, Vol. 4 1855–1868 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 282.
14. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), 37. Genette asserts that "perfect temporal correspondence between narrative and story" is "more hypothetical than real." Taking *The Iliad* as his first example, Genette cautions that narrative anachrony is not "a modern invention," 36.
15. Ibid., 35.
16. Ibid., 46.
17. See Toklas' account of Stein, the "vengeful goddess," forced to wait for her in *What Is Remembered* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1985), 23–4.
18. Genette, *Narrative Discourse, 40.*
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 85.
21. Ibid., 45.
22. Quartermain makes a similar finding about the repetition of the phrase "Lifting Belly": repetition of the title phrase throughout the poem imparts both coherence and indeterminacy, "thereby giving us permission to read it *variorum*, as in a state of constant redefinition," *Disjunctive Poetics,* 32.
23. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 56.
24. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991; original 1966), 58 and 59.
25. Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 58.
26. Quoted in Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 56.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., 57.
29. Ibid., 56.
30. Linda Simon, *The Biography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1977), 32, 261. Nellie Joseph's married name was Nellie Jacott. See also Shari Benstock's account of the letters and first meeting in *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900–*

1940 (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1986), 166. Dydo sees a teasing reference to Lilyana Hansen in the name "Lady Lillian Anne St. Peter Stanhope" which appears in *Lucy Church Amiably* (1927). See Dydo, *The Language That Rises*, 206, n66.

31. Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank,* 166.
32. Ibid.
33. Edward Burns records the first instance of the motto on her stationary in a letter from Stein to Carl Van Vechten dated July 4, 1914, collected in *The Letters of GS and CVV,* Vol. 1: 1913–1935, 24, n1. Burns notes that Toklas selected the line to serve as a motto from Stein's 1913 poem, "Sacred Emily." According to Burns, "[t]he motto appears in a circular design, both with or without a rose in the center, and different colors—silver, blue, and red—were used in printing the motto." Along with Stein's stationary, Toklas embroidered the motto on handkerchiefs, napkins, and place mats. Stein has Toklas take credit for devising the stationary motto and its uses in *ABT* 138.
34. I am indebted for this insight to Charles Altieri who identifies establishing "lover's time" as a task of love poetry in his article, "Ashbery as Love Poet": "there is a phenomenon we might call 'lover's time' implied in Wittgenstein's observation that one cannot feel deep grief or be in love for only a moment (although there are often only moments when one feels love)" in *The Tribe of John Ashbery and Contemporary Poetry*, ed. Susan M. Schultz (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1995), 27.

CHAPTER 3

Framing Space: The First Landscape Play

Stein's extended stays in the Provence region, first in 1922 in St.-Rémy and then in Nice the following year, sparked an intense period of innovation that she sustained through the 1920s. Although their traveling companions went on ahead, and their hotel was not particularly comfortable, Stein and Toklas stayed on in St.-Rémy from late summer 1922 through the winter and early spring of the next year. This visit to the south of France was a return to a region they had first visited during their wartime service. It was potentially a nostalgic trip for other reasons as well. In 1922, Stein was forty-eight years old. As I have already mentioned, before leaving Paris she had completed the manuscript of her first collection of work, *Geography And Plays*, and sent it off for publication. Assembling this volume entailed reviewing the work of previous years. On their stay in St.-Rémy, Stein and Toklas visited Roman ruins in the area, including those in nearby Les Baux and Arles, and went shopping occasionally in Avignon. But for the most part, they were content to remain in St.-Rémy where daily life was occupying. Later, Stein described the pastoral calm and sense of well-being she experienced in the rhythm of life there including, in what seems a compositional impression, the streaming motion of flocks of sheep on the mountains (*ABT* 208–9). It was in St.-Rémy that Stein wrote *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions*, her first landscape play.

Her later accounts of these extended stays sound idyllic and would seem to offer a provocative biographical anchor for the productivity of

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these years and for the prominence of landscape in her new method. The landscape homology reflects her willingness to open her work to the world again, but her experiment with the "play as landscape" does not entail description of the landscape of the Provence region, however spectacular, and the biographical record does not determine the particular style of her writing during this period. Modeling composition on landscape was not without its risks for Stein who was leery of the mimetic premise of representation. In her later account of her use of a landscape model, Stein makes a disingenuously simple claim for the co-presence of a viewer and landscape ("I felt that if a play was exactly like a landscape then there would be no difficulty about the emotion of the person looking on at the play"), and yet by this time, she had made concentrated studies of models of vision and experimented with using painterly analogies (LIA 263). A decade earlier, at another breakthrough moment, she had modeled the method of *Tender Buttons* (1912–13) on still-life painting. Therefore, to introduce landscape as a homology in the 1920s, however simple a matter Stein makes it seem, represents a continuation and complication of an ongoing experiment with painterly models insofar as landscape must also allude to landscape painting. It is useful, then, to analyze Stein's first landscape play in the context of her earlier investigation, and in what follows, I briefly summarize the experiment of *Tender Buttons* before turning to analysis of *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions.*

I am arguing that Stein's formulation of landscape as an analogy for composition was exciting and productive precisely because it promised a new spatial approach to the longstanding representational challenges she posed. As we have seen, the love poems Stein wrote during these years demonstrate her continued resistance to the comparative measures of conventional representation. No wonder, then, that the visual analogy proved so instrumental and resulted in a new method for portraiture. In order to understand the task she set herself in the landscape plays, we will need to recognize that the homology to landscape is a renewed effort to overcome the "trouble with including looking" Stein had identified in her earliest portraits (LIA 301). Landscape is a visual analogy for imparting a pronounced spatial dimension in composition and as such it reprises Stein's longstanding questions concerning how language represents (or fails to represent) things on view. In a fascinating way that demonstrates the persistence and ingenuity of her compositional innovation, Stein's use of a spatial homology during the 1920s reformulates the challenges that she had initially identified in 1908 when she began writing portraits of individuals.

The Trouble with Looking: *Tender Buttons* (1912–13) and Landscape

Stein initially rejected "looking" in writing portraits because of the consequences for time sense: "The trouble with including looking . . . was that in regard to human beings looking inevitably carried in its train realizing movements and expression and as such forced me into recognizing resemblances, and so forced remembering and in forcing remembering caused confusion of present with past and future time" (*LIA* 301). To characterize a portrait subject by establishing comparisons and resemblances entails relying on the repetition of actions or situations in his or her life and the lives of others. Stein reasons that while life requires repetition of this kind, it cannot be the basis of a portrait because in its very structure repetition does not accord with the experiential quality associated with living. We may identify repetition or resemblance when we reflect on past experience, but it is not a quality of lived existence as it unfolds in present time. Stein claimed, "there is no repetition in hearing and saying the things he hears and says when he is hearing and saying them" (*LIA* 295). The problem with "looking" is that it results in mixing time senses and therefore the portrait will not express the immediacy and contingency Stein associates with actual existence. In place of description, resemblance, or a summary account, she sought a method to convey the dynamic intensity of experience: "a portrait of any one is as they are existing" (*LIA* 293).

But "looking" would prove irresistible to Stein on a visit in 1912 to Avila, Spain, where she was struck by the quality of light, the landscape, and the association of Avila with Saint Teresa. She was relieved to rediscover "the things to look at" after a period of being "completely obsessed by the inner life of everything," and there she began writing *Tender Buttons* (*LIA* 329). A well-known text in the Stein canon, the pieces collected in *Tender Buttons* reflect Stein's jubilant return to including observation of the world by means of a new method. During her stay in Provence in the early 1920s, Stein had a similar breakthrough insight that she might "include looking" while undermining mimetic practices in yet a different way.

Indeed, in writing of the 1920s, Stein often alludes to *Tender Buttons*, deliberately linking the landscape experiments with the poems she wrote when she "first felt a desire to express the rhythm of the visible world" (*ABT* 119). Clearly, both are solutions addressing "the trouble with including looking" on painterly models—*Tender Buttons* on the basis of

still life, and the plays on that of landscape painting. But the method of these texts could hardly be more dissimilar, and a comparison of the painterly analogies can help us grasp the stakes of Stein's experiments with the plays. Differences in style reveal differences in constituting an experiment, and reading in the context of her resistance to representation, we find how neatly Stein reverses the still-life experiment of *Tender Buttons* in her first landscape play. The painterly analogy makes it plain that during the "landscape period" Stein shifts with striking results from a focus on elements to the compositional relations between elements. Whereas in *Tender Buttons*, Stein analyzed how composition might render things on view (and thereby disclose the differences in kind between the fixity of denotation and the fluidity of perception), in experiments with the landscape homology she attempts to bring relations into view so as to impart the impression of a prospect or framed space one comes upon. The comparison can help us to understand the advantages Stein seeks by formulating the landscape homology as though landscape were simply "there" in what is surely, after the experiment of *Tender Buttons,* a deliberate cultivation of a naïve pose.

Stein's visit to Spain in 1912 was a jolt, a welcome release into experience of the outside world after an intensive period of restricting her writing to impressions of "listening and talking" (*LIA* 301). The landscape, she wrote later, imparted "the feeling that something should be included and that something was looking, and so concentrating on looking I did the Tender Buttons because it was easier to do objects than people if you were just looking" (*LIA* 308). In style, *Tender Buttons* is a radical shift from the gerund-heavy, present progressive style of the early portraits such as "Picasso," (1909 or 1910) "Matisse," (1909 or 1910) and "Orta Or One Dancing" (1911–12). *Tender Buttons* has long been acknowledged as a breakthrough in method and in Stein's formulation of portraiture. The book is a collection of verbal portraits in three sections, "Objects," "Food," and "Rooms." Titles of individual pieces direct our attention to commonplace objects including "An Umbrella," "A Petticoat," "Rhubarb," and "Roastbeef," and to situations of daily life, "A Time to Eat" and "A Frightful Release." *Tender Buttons* has been much celebrated for its radical break with conventional representation in a method that emphasizes the indeterminacy and materiality of language. The pieces are composed through an intricate word play of puns, homonyms, synecdoche, and rhymes both visual and phonemic.

What kind of "looking" is represented in *Tender Buttons*? Although it was initially subtitled "Studies in Description," and Stein later claimed,

"In Tender Buttons, I described anything," critics do not consistently treat *Tender Buttons* as a descriptive project (*LIA* 302).[1] Detractors and admirers alike have tended to discount the portrait titles and to treat the pieces not as portraits or descriptions but as non-representational texts illustrating the "free play of the signifier."[2] But as Marjorie Perloff, a critic who has written extensively on *Tender Buttons* sensibly maintains, some reference however "opaque" must be involved for readers to recognize that the indeterminacy of language is at issue.[3] Obviously through its many puns and homonyms, the text foregrounds the materiality of language, but failing to recognize the descriptive project involved we miss the compositional task Stein set herself. This is a pity because it means domesticating the bold naïveté of the questions she asked about the relation of "looking" and writing: "I began to wonder at at about this time just what one saw when one looked at anything really looked at anything. Did one see sound, and what was the relation between color and sound, did it make itself by description by a word that meant it or did it make itself by a word in itself" (*LIA* 303).

If the pieces of *Tender Buttons* are difficult it is not because they are non-referential, but because they entail a radical analysis of description—one that never ceases to ask "what one saw when one looked at anything"—and that persistently interrogates the resources of language to express that activity. Adding to the difficulty, the verbal portraits are simultaneously portraits of things and portraits of words. To read the pieces as portraits of the things or states named in the titles, we might first treat the title as denotative and the text as description, but then we must also notice how the semiotic play of the text involves the title words for their material properties rather than as transparent referents. For example, we may be stumped by the title, "A Piece of Coffee" and perhaps exhilarated by the odd invitation to consider coffee as singular pieces. We teach ourselves to read the text by relating the title of the piece to the first line: "More of a double." In this instance, we can see that the second line comments on the title in which the word "of" appears twice: "A Piece **of** C **of** fee" (*TB* 13). This doubling sends the portrait (too long to analyze here) along a line of investigating "more" in relation to singularity with a persistent echo throughout of the implied question, "would you like more coffee?" There is a complex semiotic process involved that exploits the relation of words to other words, the relation of individual words to the overall composition, and of words to the objects of experience. As Michael Davidson has

observed, "[o]bjects in Stein's portraiture refuse to stay within their frames but point outwards at the referential systems in which they appear."[4]

When she resumes "looking" in the descriptive project of *Tender Buttons* Stein examines the practice of denotation as it contributes to the mimetic premise of representation. In this respect, *Tender Buttons* is an experiment deliberately modeled on still-life painting, and while it may be inconclusive, there is no good reason to simply ignore Stein's account of her writing method. About "A Little Bit Of A Tumbler," she said in an interview: "I used to take objects on a table, like a tumbler or any kind of object and try to get the picture of it clear and separate in my mind and create a word relationship between the word and the things seen."[5] Stein reasoned that it was best to treat objects rather than persons since there was less risk of memory intruding. "That is why painters paint still lives" (*LIA* 302). With this painterly model, Stein is much occupied with the part that nouns play in representation, and the portraits emphasize the operations of reference, definition, and description. She puts pressure on nouns and their naming functions, examining whether they are adequate and necessary in their referential operations or whether objects might be called to mind apart from the operations of nouns. Stein objected to the dulling effects of naming, and a great deal of the difficulty of *Tender Buttons* stems from her decision that one can dispense with the conventional use of nouns: "And the thing that excited me so very much at that time and still does is that the words or words that make what I looked at be itself were always words that to me very exactly related themselves to that thing the thing at which I was looking, but as often as not had as I say nothing whatever to do with what any words would do that described that thing" (*LIA* 303).

One approach to reading the text then is to analyze how systematically Stein tests conventional propositional forms, including denotation, definition, and signification, and to identify her strategies for mining and redirecting the expressive dimension of these operations in the portraits. For example, in the portrait "A Long Dress," Stein hijacks the form of the ontological question, "What is an X?" through a series of repetitions that effectively sounds different affective tones with the "same" question.

> A LONG DRESS.
>
> What is the current that makes machinery, that makes it crackle, what is the current that presents a long line and a necessary waist. What is this current.
>
> What is the wind, what is it.

> Where is the serene length, it is there and a dark place is not a dark place, only a white and red are black, only a yellow and green are blue, a pink is scarlet, a bow is every color. A line distinguishes it. A line just distinguishes it. (TB 18)

Stein generates a sense of urgency simply by not answering the questions she poses, creating expectations without fulfilling the form of the proposition. Clearly the word "current" plays on the French expression, *au courant*, and at the same time initiates various associations related to currents including electrical (the current that "makes machinery," perhaps the sewing machine for the dress) and the current of the wind. The urgency that builds through repetition, the mounting associations of wind, electricity and water currents, and the present tense verbs combine to present the dress not as a static object but within a crackling field of energy. "Where is" comes as a startling question simply because of the change from the repeated form, "What is," and the poem abruptly shifts in tone from the charged energy to a quieter tone that introduces "the serene length." We can speculate about various associations to dresses in the images suggested by "a dark place," the colors named, and the bow. After so much questioning, the repetition with variation of the flat statement "A line distinguishes it" registers a tone of quiet assurance as it both raises and resolves questions concerning distinction, completes the dress ("distinguishes it") and the portrait. The "line," of course, enters into the assemblage of associations. It may refer to the bow, or to the length of the dress (seeing the dress as lines), to the several currents, and to a line in the poem.

The text develops at least in part by mining the intratextual association of the words in play, but it is not a hermeneutic exercise. In its deliberate frustration of the ontological question "what is—," we are reminded that in the writing of *Tender Buttons* Stein returns to the very foundations of description with the probing question, "I began to wonder at at about this time just what one saw when one looked at anything really looked at anything" (*LIA* 303). In her experiment, Stein assumes that perception cannot be separated from language use, that language is a part of what we see when we look, "Did one see sound, and what was the relation between color and sound" (303). We cannot assume that in reading the portraits of *Tender Buttons* we learn what Stein saw when she looked at ordinary objects. This would be to treat the portraits as representations, however innovative in style, when clearly they demonstrate an experiment with the constraints of representation. But neither should we dismiss her

claims that the experiment entails "looking." In a field of energy, fashion currents join electrical and natural currents, so that, in a way that defies paraphrase, the making, viewing, and wearing of the dress are linked to the curiously erotic charge of making the portrait. Failing to recognize this as portraiture, we miss how ardently Stein examines the very basis of representation, the indexical gesture involved in denotation, and the predicate logic entailed in definition.

And, as we see in "A Long Dress," if they are modeled on still-life painting, the portraits of *Tender Buttons* are not still. Like Cézanne, whose *rèalization* she alluded to in later accounts of *Tender Buttons*, Stein appears to have discovered that objects one focuses upon only appear still.[6] According to the art historian Jonathan Crary, in the late 1880s Cézanne may have believed that careful attention to sense data would reveal a phenomenological "realm of essences" or "some primary structure to the world." But his late work reveals Cézanne's understanding that, on the contrary, careful attention to sense data discloses the lack or dissolution of unity, and the flux of objects on view. Seen from the perspective of a "fixed eye," the world *moves*. As Crary explains,

> the fixed, immobile eye (at least as static as physiological conditions ever allow) is what annihilates the seeming "naturalness" of the world and discloses the provisional and fluid nature of visual experience, whereas the mobile glancing eye is what preserves the preconstructed character of the world. The latter is the eye that habitually, familiarly caresses objects, extracting only previously established relations from among them. Once the eye stops moving, a potentially volatile situation arises: after a relatively brief period of time the immobile eye triggers a ferment of activity—it is the doorway to both trance and to perceptual disintegration.[7]

In a similar way, by fixing on isolated objects of view, "try[ing] to get the picture of it clear and separate in my mind,"[8] Stein seems to have discovered that objects only appear still. The arrested or immobilized gaze reveals that objects pulse, shimmy, and vibrate. Likewise, the objects of *Tender Buttons* move in relation to other objects. "How does a carafe move?" asks Lyn Hejinian of the first poem in *Tender Buttons*, "In an arrangement."[9] Presenting "things seen" in an arrangement is a method of defamiliarization by means of which Stein obstructs the resemblance and recognition associated with the conventional use of nouns. This is in keeping with her resistance to the fixity of nouns and naming and their

dulling consequences: "After all one had known its name anything's name for so long, and so the name was not new but the thing being alive was always new" (*LIA* 330).

And yet, if as Hejinian contends Stein mounts a "radical challenge to the primacy and centrality of the noun" in *Tender Buttons* it is also the case that nouns have rarely been so much on display in a text.[10] It is a curious outcome that in resisting nouns Stein should produce a text so abundant in memorable, crisply defined verbal objects. The "realization" of the objects portrayed, and the autonomy of the verbal object, depends on the relations established in and among the words in use. But if these arrangements are meant to circumvent the noun, to bypass its arresting action and to set things in motion, nonetheless, the end result is a text that is resplendent in nouns.[11] As I have insisted, the referential gesture of the titles obliges us in "looking" to look for an object, to something isolated on view, however much the title will generate a surprising trajectory of associations.

Renewing looking again in the landscape of Provence more than ten years later, Stein redeploys strategies from the experiment of *Tender Buttons* now to much different effect. The experiments of the landscape plays are inversely related to that of *Tender Buttons*: in the plays Stein has shifted the focus from the terms to the relations between terms. Once one grasps it, this seems a simple compositional strategy—a matter of shifting focus from the foreground to the background—to put it in the painterly terms Stein adopts during this period. Because of the portrait titles and the concern with nouns and naming, *Tender Buttons* is an insistently indexical text, much occupied with questions concerning language use in relation to the external world: what do we see when we look, how does language re-present or fail to re-present the objects of experience and the fluidity of perceptual experience? *Tender Buttons* proceeds by tracing relations between the title word and the portrait, presenting and distinguishing objects by means of a set of relations. The landscape writing exaggerates this interest in relations further, and this shift in emphasis accounts for the pronounced differences in the style of *Tender Buttons* and writing of the landscape period. While texts of the landscape period include nouns, these are frequently overrun or seemingly screened behind the dense use of articles and modifiers indicating modality.

Working from a model of still-life painting, in *Tender Buttons* Stein exercises the defamiliarization she thought painters bring to seeing objects, as in Cézanne's famous "forgetting," or the ability to paint as Stein claimed

for Picasso, "things seen not as one knows them but as they are when one sees them without remembering having looked at them."[12] On the model of landscape painting, by contrast, she seeks to imitate the painter's ability to convey a composed scene that a viewer "comes upon." Insofar as both frame space and establish relations among elements, clearly still-life and landscape painting are related; landscape painting is the tableau of the still-life writ large, if one likes. But one can shift perspective simply by determining whether it is the objects or the relations that are the focus, and Stein frequently initiates a compositional strategy merely by reversing the terms of a former strategy. Whereas in *Tender Buttons* objects emerged as the result of their relations, the landscape plays shift focus to the relations themselves. In the plays, Stein blocks the indexical gesture that refers "out" in the portrait titles of *Tender Buttons* and is recouped in composition. When she undermines the grounds for the referential gesture through experiments in the plays with framing, Stein creates the impression of a spatial dimension and the illusion that the play exists with the immanence of a landscape on view.

This immanence is the quality that made the landscape appealing as a homology for writing plays. As Stein describes the landscape it is implacable, it exists without the viewing and any viewer must acknowledge this quality.

> I felt that if a play was exactly like a landscape then there would be no difficulty about the emotion of the person looking on at the play being behind or ahead of the play because the landscape does not have to make acquaintance. You may have to make acquaintance with it, but it does not with you, it is there and so the play being written the relation between you at any time is so exactly that that it is of no importance unless you look at it. (*LIA* 263)

The structural formation of the landscape is composed by the relation among its elements and therefore the existence of the landscape requires no explanation or introduction. The implacable nature Stein grants landscape may remind us of the autonomy she recognized in painting which she admired for achieving "an existence in and for itself" apart from mimetic representation (*LIA* 225). The self-containment and immanence Stein associated with landscape become for her a model for writing plays without relying on the illusion of narrative or dramatic action. Movement in the landscape plays will not depend on unfolding dramatic action but

rather on the relations between elements, "a movement in and out with which anybody looking on can keep in time" (*LIA* 269).

We must square Stein's account of the immanence and immediacy of landscape in her lecture with recognition that by the time she devised the landscape homology for plays she was well aware of varying visual models as well as the complexities entailed in experiments with representation. During the 1920s, "looking" will again depend upon the relations among elements, but in comparison to the "fixed eye" stance of *Tender Buttons*, her model of landscape for plays seems to premise a "mobile glancing eye [that] preserves the preconstructed character of the world."[13] Stein describes a scenic model of landscape, a panoramic view that an observer stands before and apprehends: "You may have to make acquaintance with [the landscape], but it does not with you, it is there" (*LIA* 263). Landscape is a mutable field comprised by the relations of its "formation," but there is no question that it exists: "it is there." In her initial experiments with a landscape model such as *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions*, Stein assumes an ideal relation of unmediated co-presence between a viewer and an objectively existing landscape.

The question then becomes, why did Stein propose a scenic model of landscape when she knew better? The classical model of vision had been discredited well before 1893 when Stein arrived at the Harvard Annex (re-named Radcliffe College the following year) where she was a student of William James and of Hugo Münsterberg, who supervised her work at the Harvard Psychological Laboratory. According to Crary, "classical models of vision" in which "an ideal observer had the capacity to apprehend instantaneously the unedited contents of a visual field" came under attack between 1810 and 1840 by researchers in a variety of scientific disciplines including psychology and psychophysics.[14] By the 1860s, new models of "subjective vision," based on the experiments of Hermann von Helmholtz, Gustav Fechner, and Wilhelm Wundt, among others, recognized that "our perceptual and sensory experience depends less on the nature of an external stimulus than on the composition and functioning of our sensory apparatus."[15] Scientific research on the functioning of the eye as well as studies of hearing revealed that both are complex, aggregate processes.[16] To their surprise, researchers measuring neurological responses found that perception of a stimulus requires far more time than previously imagined.[17] The "punctual or anchored classical observer" construed as standing in "an ideal relation of self-presence between observer and world" had been replaced by the modern conception of a decentered

observer for whom perception is embodied, selective, and temporal.[18] The seemingly "uniform fabric of perceptual experience" was revealed to be fractured, fluctuating, and provisional.[19] Where formerly the scenic model of vision neatly distinguished between the world external to the viewer and the interiority of the subject, experience ceased to belong to the subject in quite the same naturalized way once it was quantified by external measures and exhaustively researched.[20]

Crary claims that these radical developments in the understanding of perception and in the model of vision resulted in an epistemological crisis of the very kind Kant had anticipated if synthetic a priori categories did not guarantee unity of perception and cognition: "Unity of synthesis according to empirical concepts would be altogether accidental, if these latter were not based on a transcendental ground of unity. Otherwise it would be possible for appearances to crowd in upon the soul. . . Since connection in accordance with universal and necessary laws would be lacking, all relation of knowledge to objects would fall away."[21] Once transcendental guarantors of unity were discredited, researchers in a variety of fields were pressed to account for perceptual and cognitive synthesis and the relative stability of perception. Crary argues that attention became crucial in early nineteenth-century accounts of perception precisely because this epistemological shift prompted the need for a principle of selection, a filter or a "repressive and disciplinary defense" against the potential disruption of perceptual flux and free association.[22] For researchers in newly established scientific laboratories, attention was not merely an instrument but the chief object of study. Stein herself conducted research measuring the processes of attention in James's lab at Harvard and published her findings in an article on "Cultivated Motor Automatism" in the *Psychological Review* in May 1898.[23] Her later theoretical writing, especially where it concerns modernist painting, demonstrates Stein's awareness that perception is partial, fragmented, and subjective.[24]

Why then was the scenic model of landscape with its fictions of self-presence appealing to Stein during the 1920s? Given that in *Tender Buttons*, Stein, like Cézanne before her, appears to have discovered that a "fixed eye" reveals the fluctuations of perception, it is all the more surprising that in the landscape writing of the 1920s, she would resume exploration on a model of vision that seems to premise the immediacy of self-presence and the co-presence of the world and viewer. In this, Stein is not alone, of course. Rosalind Krauss has described the modernist equation of the "indivisible instant of seeing" with the ontology of painting: "Modernism

was to absolutize this 'now,' to insist that Painting exist within the indivisible present of the extremest possible perceptual intensity: the rush of pure color; the shock of light-on-dark as ground pulls level with figure; the reduction of the world to pattern."[25] What might Stein gain in hypothesizing such an "indivisible instant of seeing"?

Once we recognize that with the landscape homology Stein reprises a project of renewed "looking" that builds on the discoveries of *Tender Buttons*, I think we must grant that she stages a deliberately naïve pose in her claims for landscape ("it is there"). This stance corresponds to the unexamined experience the viewer has that the landscape precedes and endures past its viewing. Doing so allows Stein to marshal the compositional force of the paradox that landscape is both an expanse that exists and a view one constructs. As such, it combines yet another set of related paradoxes concerning time sense: landscape endures, it continues to exist without a viewer, and yet in "coming into view" it presents a quality of immediacy. Stein varies the configuration of the landscape homology in successive experiments as she mines the temporal implications of these paradoxes in exploring the compositional problem, "of time in relation to emotion" in plays. She insists on the presence of landscape with Cézannean *rèalization* ("it is there") and seeks to make such immanence felt, even as subsequent experiments with landscape plays demonstrate her full awareness that whatever is "there" exists through the frame of subjective and fluctuating perception. Neither simply the landscape on view nor landscape painting, we must ask what Stein makes of landscape when she deploys the homology since in composition she can adopt and engage any combination of the temporal paradoxes possible.

In order for landscape in composition to appear to exist as a space animated by relations, the first step must be to create such a pronounced spatial dimension in the text, and the next will be to create flux within that space that approximates the contingency and perpetual flux of "looking." To resume our comparison, if *Tender Buttons* is focused on objects, elements "in an arrangement," the task of the landscape plays is to put relations rather than elements on view. The expressive dimension of the play shifts from dramatic action to the relations in suspension. And here is the paradox that I think Stein knowingly sustains in establishing this compositional experiment: the "play as landscape" must present the autonomy and immanence of landscape as a formation on view, and yet at the same time, the landscape only exists as the composition of relations. In the sequence of the landscape plays, therefore, we find Stein experimenting with both

frame and flux. Please check if identified head levels are okay. The subheadings are okay (properly placed and correct).

Voice Plays of the 1910s

We have only to read the plays Stein wrote in the teens to appreciate that the landscape plays represent a radical departure. Stein wrote her first plays, including *What Happened. A Five Act Play*, and *A Curtain Raiser* in 1913 after the experiment of *Tender Buttons*, and as critics have observed, the initial plays share certain aspects of its style. In 1916 when Stein and Toklas lived in Palma de Mallorca as a respite from the war, and in the years immediately following their return to Paris, Stein wrote scores of pieces she carefully designated as "plays."[26] She published many of these in *Geography And Plays*, the collection she reviewed before leaving for the South of France, including *Do Let Us Go Away. A Play*, *Please Do Not Suffer. A Play, I Like It To Be A Play. A Play*, and *Mexico. A Play*, a piece she wrote late in 1916 upon her return home to Paris. Critics refer to these as "conversation plays" or "dialogues" because the plays are chiefly composed of brief exchanges among many named persons none of whom develop into conventional characters. The plays give instead the impression of conversations overheard between visitors of the island and its local inhabitants, that is, "Loud voices heard by me."[27] Edith Sitwell described the effect as "an irritating ceaseless rattle like that of American sightseers talking in a boarding-house."[28] News of the war intrudes constantly, "Individual cases do not bring the war home to me" (*G&P* 215). Many of these pieces parody the concerns of comedies of manners, including establishing family history, social connections, and the likes and dislikes of a certain class of characters. Of Mrs. Marchand in *Please Do Not Suffer*, for example, we are to learn (but do not): "Where was she born and with whom did she go to school. Did she know the Marquise of Bowers then or did she not" (262). Stein enjoys devising witty exchanges for her characters in the manner of Oscar Wilde: "Does it take an education to travel./It does if you wish to take part in the conversation" (54). Stein names characters and actions, but does not develop plot; there are simply far too many names and too many exchanges to offer more than fleeting impressions.

As the title *Do Let Us Go Away* suggests, these plays are replete with reports of the movements of characters, including: arrangements to stay, "Please rent a garden for chickens and a turkey" (217); or to leave, "I have seen the consul he is going to get me a passport" (225); their manner of leaving, "If they go they leave suddenly" (225); and in *Please Do Not Suffer* their inability to leave, "Let us go away. We cannot because my husband cannot go away" (264). While the plays do not develop the illusionism associated with characters and places, word choice suggests that concern with freedom of movement is prompted by the war, and in *Mexico* Stein comments on her encounter back at home in Paris of "[a] great many soldiers in the streets" (327).[29]

We might think of the incessant reports of comings and goings that characterize the voice plays as a preliminary effort on Stein's part to address her objections to conventional plays. The sheer number of named characters together with their constant arrivals and departures results in much "making acquaintance" with one another: "In speaking of Mallorca we must remember that there is making acquaintance. They make acquaintance with each other" (223). As Stein later explained in her lecture, the viewer's need to "make acquaintance" with the characters and background of a play "makes anybody nervous" because it puts her emotion out of synch with "the emotional time of the play" (*LIA* 244–5). But in Stein's voice plays, the named characters must "make acquaintance" with one another, while readers or viewers need not since character and plot do not develop conventionally over the course of the play.[30] This resolution of the problem—flooding the play with the performance of "making acquaintance"—ultimately produces much lively dialog, but little emotion. In contrast, in *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions*, Stein dispenses altogether with the practices of "making acquaintance," and attempts to imitate the self-containment and immediate presence of landscape.

The First Landscape Play: *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions* (1922)

Stein wrote *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions* in six small *cahiers*. On the back inside cover of the first *cahier* she drew a landscape in pencil. A line distinguishes sky from mountain, and in the midst of looping "S" shapes

that resemble loose brushstrokes, she has drawn a woman bending over at the waist. In the sky section she wrote: "The sky is blue," and on the mountain, "The hills are green." A line indicating the woman reads, "She is green too/and her eyes are blue."

On the inside front cover of the first *cahier* Stein worked out the title of the play. She has written, "Lend a Hand," and below this she seems to have crossed out the word "the" and substituted the word "or." Below this she has written and crossed out "Story for Religions" and added the homonym "Four" above this. She seems to develop the title through the homonym because the next line (also crossed out) reads: "Four Religions" followed by "at play." "Lend A Hand Or the Story for Religions" becomes "Lend A Hand Or Four Religions at play." Her initials, GS, written loosely in cursive at the top of the page resemble "S" shapes and she has drawn four "S" shapes in formation at the bottom of the page along with the play on her name and that of Alice Toklas: "Gertice/Altrude."

For the title of the play Stein drew on a phrase from her childhood in Oakland when as schoolchildren she and her brother, Leo were asked to report instances of having "lent a hand" at home, but this proved difficult as Stein later observed, since they "spent [their] time at home mostly eating fruit and reading books, [we] never could remember how we had lent a hand."[31] In what sounds a bit like warming up, Stein begins the play with phrases remembered from childhood. She quotes from the motto of the Lend A Hand Society, a nineteenth-century charitable organization: "Look up and not down/Look forward and not back/Look out and not in/Lend a Hand."[32] Stein splices the remembered expression together with a sentence in which she imitates grammatical declension of the verb "to lend." This effectively replaces spatial directions with verbal directives.

> Look up and not down look right and not left look forward and not back and lend a hand.
>
> We lend you lend they lend he lends they lend you lend we lend he lends.
>
> And then they tell to-day they tell it to-day they tell it to-day and yesterday and to-morrow. (*UK* 170)

The opening lines suggest that perspective is at issue. There is an imperative to look (up, right), but even without reference to the Lend A Hand society motto, we notice that this looking almost immediately becomes *telling*. It is a curious beginning for a play modeled on landscape since it does not present a landscape to be seen, and yet is much occupied with

the act of looking or the imperative to look. Along with these directives to look and to lend, the opening preamble involves mixing time senses ("today and yesterday and to-morrow") and suggests that the challenges in playwriting concern viewing position in relation to grammatical case and time sense. The solution may be a matter of establishing relative (and reversible) positions—up or down and right or left—within the developing composition rather than fixing temporal chronology. In this first landscape play, Stein will experiment with creating a sense of spatial dimension by means of relations, thereby evoking the presentational force she associated with the landscape on view.

This first attempt at a landscape play is arguably Stein's most successful of "the St.-Remy period," if we decide success on the basis of how dramatically she registers an impression of a spatial dimension and a quality of immanence. The play rewards study for the challenges it poses to realist drama and to production, but for my purposes in tracing the development of Stein's epistemology, I will focus on her methods for achieving this pronounced impression of immanence. While she will complicate the landscape homology in successive experiments with framing devices, this quality of immanence is critical because it becomes the basis for a model of knowledge in which knowing transpires with a quality of immediate apprehension or revelation.

Reading the play, we step into a new world, or better, one of energetic "world-making." No listed characters, no given setting or time frame. How would it be performed we wonder? In marked contrast to Stein's voice plays of the teens, full of busy movement and witty exchanges, this first landscape play is characterized by steady repetition and stillness. The play proceeds by testing compositional elements and their effects, namely, whether sight or sound (or their mixture) most contributes to the emotional delay for the viewer, or, as Stein asked, "Is the thing seen or the thing heard the thing that makes most of its impression upon you at the theatre" (*LIA* 249). The first half of the play emphasizes visual effects, and the main problem is how to compose a spatial dimension in the text and to bring elements into view. Sound emerges in the latter half of the play with a clap of thunder: "If she should hear and wonder would she wonder if she heard and there was thunder" (*UK* 185–6).

The dominant image in the opening pages of the play is of a woman kneeling by water; evidently what she does is of little importance, what is striking is the marvelous way in which she comes into view.[33] The woman emerges gradually by means of speaking parts that rotate among

four anonymous religions, designated only as "First Religion," "Second Religion," and so on. These exchanges among the four religions replace conventional dramatic action, but are they speaking parts? Since Stein does not adhere to conventions of playwriting in which the side text consistently designates speaking parts for characters, it is unclear how we are meant to read the lines assigned the four religions. Are these four voices speaking in succession, or might we regard these as four contradictory and overlapping viewpoints that occur simultaneously?

> First religion advances and then sees some one she advances and then she sees some one.
> Second religion Second religion they advance and they see some one, they advance and they see some one as they advance.
> Third religion She advances and she sees some one, she sees some one or she advances.
> Fourth religion As she advances she sees some one. Some one is seen by her as she advances. (*UK* 170)

From one line to the next, each of the four viewpoints differs from the preceding so that while they may share an object, it is not ever the "same" object or view.[34] By developing an abstract, fugal framework, Stein begins composing a spatial dimension in the text that builds as the result of investigating the operations of a frame. This innovation counters our expectations in a disarming way; while we might expect the enumerated religions to identify characters or at least designate discrete speaking parts, what they actually do is direct our attention to *what is seen*. In the opening pages, the four religions "advance and see some one," a woman, who in turn also advances and "sees some one." In this way, our perspective as viewers is preempted by abstract figures in the play who themselves "see some one." Stein has neatly recast the problem of "making acquaintance" that so troubled her as a problem *within* the play for its set of viewers.

The steady, accretive exchanges among the four religions block the sequence or succession of conventional dramatic action, and this too contributes to the sense of a spatial site gradually building in the play. Scenes or passages formed through the reiteration of exchanges among the four religions would appear to "take time" in which to unfold, yet each scene so composed instead appears to take shape in a single, self-contained frame. Following Stein's observations about the stillness of landscape, Lyn

Hejinian has likened the arrested motion of landscape to a *tableau vivant*: "In essence the landscape, by virtue of its own laws, is transformed under attention into a tableau, a *tableau vivant*; episodes become qualities."[35] Stein creates this effect in part by exaggerating the problem of "making acquaintance" that troubled her in watching plays, and by deploying a strategy of "A Sonatina Followed By Another" to render succession spatial. She demonstrates that there is no reference point from which to ascertain which elements are "following" and which "leading" when both the religions and the woman they see are simultaneously advancing. The viewer's introduction to characters has been replaced by the religions' efforts to determine the relative places of constituent elements and these efforts form the space of the play. The four religions present their questions with a tone of utter simplicity that can dip into a wide affective range—coolly insouciant, slightly portentous, mildly brooding, by turns sentimental.

Then, too, the actions assigned to the woman and by means of which she emerges are unusual, neutral, and incomplete; they do not develop dramatic action in any ordinary way. Potential actions are typically offered in the future conditional tense, and often immediately canceled: she may or may not advance or be led, see someone, furnish a house, or kneel beside water. Often these proposed activities aren't actions at all, but potential ideation (as Wendy Steiner long ago observed about Stein's early portraits),[36] including questions about what the woman knows or believes she knows. We see Stein hard at work in the opening of the play, trying to get the woman to come into view through questions posed by the four religions, and then working to bring the religions themselves in from around the edges of the frame into the picture. Perhaps the exertion of willing the woman into existence, along with a bid for a sense of well-being, accounts for the opening word play on "well" and "will" (171–3).

Clearly, landscape painting was on Stein's mind. She treats the text as a pictorial plane or flat surface that she has made and where she can put *things*. Later she would write to her collaborator, the composer Virgil Thomson about the effort required to make the saints appear in *Four Saints In Three Acts*: "I think I have got St. Therese onto the stage, it has been an awful struggle and I think I can keep her on and gradually by the second act get St. Ignatius on and then they will both be on together but not at once in the third act."[37] *Lend A Hand* is Stein's first experiment

in rendering a pronounced spatial dimension in a play. She creates not material figures per se but figures that materialize enough to occupy the space that they create, and proceeds as if questions of composition are now painterly, a matter of what to put *here* as counterpoint to *that* in place of what happens next. The painterly mode serves as an antidote to narrative with its ready identifications. In the play, Stein collects together an odd assortment of elements, including the four religions, an Italian stableman, a Chinese Christian, among others. Underscoring their artifice, these are pieces drawn from different drawers which refuse to cohere neatly, nor are they images that will form a decorative motif, or describe a particular landscape. They are slotted into the picture plane of the play without losing their awkward strangeness, forming a "compound of separate images" as T.J. Clark describes the bathers in Cézanne's painting, *Bathers at Rest* (Barnes Foundation, 1875–77).[38]

There are many reasons to liken Stein's practice to Cézanne's during her "St.-Remy period," not least that she was living in the Provence region, the site of his *motifs*. Stein herself linked *Lend A Hand* to the artist by closing the portrait of Cézanne she wrote the following year with a line much elaborated in the play, "There where the grass can grow nearly four times yearly" (*SR* 428).[39] It is tempting to suggest that the woman figure who "kneels beside the water" in *Lend A Hand* echoes the figures in Cézanne's *Bathers* sequence (1894–1906). Stein and her brother, Leo, saw Cézanne's *Three Bathers (c. 1881-82)* at the 1904 Salon d'Automne where it was on loan by Matisse. That year they purchased Cézanne's *Bathers* (1898–1900), a small painting related to the *Bathers* sequence, *Group of Bathers* (1892–94), a composition of male nudes, and two lithographs related to the *Bathers* series.[40] Gertrude kept the *Bathers* after she and Leo divided the collection, and in a 1922 Man Ray photograph of 27, rue de Fleurus, it is visible to one side of the fireplace.[41] By this time, Leo had sold *Group of Bathers* to Dr. Albert Barnes and it became part of the Barnes Foundation collection. In 1923 Stein might have seen the notice in *Les Arts à Paris* of the Pennsylvania state charter for the Barnes' "educational institution" along with mention of the paintings housed there.[42]

Connections to Cézanne's paintings are speculative, of course, and if there is compositional affinity between Stein's play and Cézanne's painting, it primarily concerns method not subject matter. In Cézanne's paintings, the many bathers are crudely painted; the same hatch mark technique used to render their bodies is used for the landscape. Their bodies are ungainly because they are shaped by modulating pictorial elements rather

than plastic modeling, and therefore, in a manner that seems disquieting for bodies, they remain "open to preserve a relationship with the pre-representational values of tone and contrast."[43] The deliberate "rhyming and repetition" of bodily poses that renders the figures interchangeable flattens the picture plane, suppressing narrative and dispelling illusionism. According to Clark, "[p]oses and gestures are locked together on the picture surface and repeated and repeated until the dullest viewer gets the point."[44]

Cézanne's work proves a useful critical model because it reveals the incommensurability of seeing and painting, and demonstrates that painting might exploit that incommensurability.[45] This accounts for the anxiety his painting may cause viewers. For her part, Stein was attuned to the "nervousness" she felt on viewing a play as a problem of "syncopation," that is, her awareness of the difference between her sensory experience and conventional illusionism. Like Cézanne, Stein refused to use illusionism to mask differences in kind between sensory experience and representational means. The immanence of Cézanne's paintings was appealing because it was the hard-won solution to a problem of representation: it resulted from disclosing the divide between sensory experience and "the life of nature" and between sensation and painting, and making the painting from this experience. Of Cézanne's landscapes, Stein claimed:

> [t]he landscape looked like a landscape that is to say what is yellow in the landscape looked yellow in the oil painting, and what was blue in the landscape looked blue in the oil painting and if it did not there still was the oil painting, the oil painting by Cezanne. . . . Finished or unfinished it always was what it looked like the very essence of an oil painting because everything was always there, really there. (*LIA* 235)

Following Cézanne's example allowed Stein to maintain an ontological definition of the "problem of plays" as one of experiential incommensurability while framing her solution on a painterly model that creates "real" effects by disclosing the reality and autonomy of its medium. To double the senses of "landscape" to refer both to the actual expanse on view and to landscape painting is to understand landscape as both "there, really there" with a quality of immanence that painting might attempt to imitate, and, at the same time, as fundamentally "not-there" in representation as Cézanne's landscapes disclose the autonomy of the painting.

So, while Stein approximates painterly techniques in the play, what I think she ultimately takes from Cézanne's example is not a set of techniques but a model for imparting compositional force. By imitating Cézanne, Stein conveys a palpable quality of immanence in which events can appear to transpire in the play with an eerie suspension of time that results from the expression of two apparently contradictory time senses, duration and immediacy. That Stein puts the "problem of plays" as a temporal problem and seeks to create presentational force in place of illusion is both a carryover of the challenges of the love poems and a critical aspect of what will become her formulation of an epistemology of equivalence.

Rendering Cézanne's Immanence in the Landscape Play

Art historians have long remarked on the "strangely positive force" of Cézanne's landscapes, on his ability to render "a representation of the conscientiously and intensively examined reality of nature, so to speak in the state of becoming."[46] Whereas Roskill has identified resonance as a defining feature of landscape painting,[47] what I am calling immanence in Cézanne's landscapes emerges as an expressive dimension of the paintings through their affirmation that the *motif* exists apart from human willing and is, at the same time, dependent on the contingent activity of seeing. Immanence entails a seeming indifference to viewers or viewing, the persistence in space of elements encountered as a found order, and, yet it must also be an expression that results from viewing: the view one comes upon is evidently found-as-seen. An implacable quality, immanence is an elusive property insofar as it is an effect of overall composition. Various aspects of Cézanne's method in his late landscapes contribute to the impression of immanence, including his complex rendering of space, color, and light, and the implications of these on the temporal dimension conveyed.

Art historians have commented on the flatness typical of these paintings, the violation of conventional aerial perspective that ties the mountain to the foreground.[48] In place of conventional recession, Cézanne creates surface homogeneity through compositional correspondence, the "nonhierarchical repetition of motifs of color, shape, or directional line."[49] Elements within the paintings are unified through equivalence in illusionistic depth.[50] However, flatness fails to describe the unique volumetric effect that Cézanne accomplishes through color modulation, arranging

color planes in a stepwise series of chromatic nuance. According to one art historian, he thereby attains a new kind of solidity for objects: "The volumes attain by means of these tiny, overlapping color planes a solidity different from that attained through mere dark-to-light modeling; it is a solidity based on the protruding character of warm color and the receding tendency of cool."[51] In this way Cézanne reveals the pressures entailed in folding three-dimensional effects into two dimensions: the overlapping of individual color planes creates three-dimensional effects, while the color throughout maintains two-dimensional character because individual color planes are discrete, unblended, and applied parallel to the picture plane. And if it is flat, the picture plane is not still in these late landscapes, even while it blocks the kind of movement typical of landscape painting that presents an imaginary passage into and through the picture field. Movement in the viewing of Cézanne's landscape paintings is of an entirely different order. There is no passage *through*, rather forms in the painting appear to advance and recede simultaneously as a result of the combination of surface and depth effects.[52]

Let me illustrate this treatment of space and form with two of Cézanne's late landscapes, the *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1902–04 in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire*, c. 1904–06 in the Kunsthaus Zürich. In the *Mont Sainte-Victoire* of the Philadelphia collection, the great mass of the mountain sits above an intensely restless foreground. This version of the scene balances the lighter tones of the mountain peak with a dark foreground, thought to correspond to the tops of trees, which is tightly aligned to the canvas plane. The mountain is tied to the foreground and middle ground through various methods that create surface homogeneity, such as vertical brushstrokes and the repetition of color in the composition. Colors of the foreground including gray-black, blue-black, and dark green are painted in loose brushstrokes that recur in color patches dotting the horizontal axis. Depending on its location and orientation, the blue-black color contributes to the effects of recession or outlines the mountain edges. An open parabolic shape of golden ochre, with a few roof outlines to suggest farmhouses or structures, seems suffused with light because of its placement in sharp contrast with the dark foreground. This ochre color recurs at the horizon line at the base of the mountain where it is darkened by greens. It recurs again in the middle distance where it is broken up with color patches of emerald green and pale pink. Likewise, emerald greens and jade greens form part of the modeling

of the sky above the mountain, unifying the top third of the canvas with the foreground field.

According to Lawrence Gowing, color in the painting ceases to be primarily representational and linear marks are expository rather than descriptive: the "affinity and correspondence" that establishes compositional unity has become paramount and replaces mimetic representation.[53] At the center of the painting, stretching toward and including the mountain, the canvas appears to be in motion, composed of a field of dynamic color relations. Patches of sharply contrasting colors including various greens, dark blues, and ochre interact vigorously in localized areas of the canvas. A light green is cooler relative to a warmer ochre and seems to recede, but where ochre is laid next to an indigo blue it appears to move forward, seemingly touched by light. Rather than fixing recession, the overlapping color patches create pronounced rhythms and that rhythmical motion unifies the picture plane.

The color patches proved an entirely new method to render form. According to Gowing: "[t]he detail of the landscape was reimagined in bands of color modulation, with sharp contrasts that gave an effect of pleated surfaces like folding screens arrayed across the plain."[54] Although the mountain is roughly outlined, it is the color patches that lend it sculptural form. Where the mountain crests, a light sky-blue block of vertical brushstrokes tilts to the right, so that the top of the brushstrokes supports and defines the edge. Underneath the light blue patch, a series of highly varied color patches cascades, including light sienna, blue iris, white, and more sky blue, forming the front of the mountain. The overlapping of these color patches at the crest creates the impression that the mountain protrudes forward even as the light color values recede in relation to the darker greens and blues of the mountain slopes. This rendering imparts a sense of an imposing presence combined with a quality of lightness.

Turning to the Zürich *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire* helps to define Cézanne's method further since here his handling is more abstract. In this version, blunt color patches unify the composition without suggesting mimetic correspondence to details of the landscape.[55] The "calculated precision" of the color patches is a means to insist on the autonomy of the canvas and on its capacity to create an equivalent of perceptual apprehension and a harmony parallel to that of the observed world. Gowing writes:

> Cézanne's patches do not represent materials or facets or variations of tint. In themselves they do not represent anything. It is the relationships between

> them—relationships of affinity and contrast, the progression from tone to tone in a color scale, and the modulations from scale to scale—that parallel the apprehension of the world. The sense of these color patches rests on their juxtapositions and their alignments one with another, so that they imply not only volumes but axes, armatures at right angles to the chromatic progressions which state the rounded surfaces of forms.[56]

The juxtaposition of color patches in the Zürich painting is striking and clearly reveals how this method contributes to the spatial illusion. In the foreground, bands of gray-black color patches advance and curve into the center of the canvas, yet directly behind these bands in the middle distance vivid emerald color patches retain the flatness of the picture plane. The spatial illusion of the picture, including the impression of proximity or distance of the mountain, changes as the eye moves across the canvas on the horizontal axis, or follows the layers of vertical color patches that advance and recede on the vertical axis. Each axis is determined and complicated by the alignment of the vertical brushstrokes.

The Zürich version imparts the sense of an unfolding order, one that perpetually forms and dissolves as viewers establish shifting impressions of the scene. "We are still not altogether accustomed to this kind of representation," Gowing claims.[57] That is, a systematic use of color that corresponds to the perception of the landscape on view (*réalization*) and yet results in neither conventional verisimilitude nor pure abstraction. The "logic" of Cézanne's color patches traces the perceptual apprehension of the world and, because Cézanne assumes that there is an order to apprehend even as he registers the contingency and instability of perception, the paintings impart a potent sense of the immanence of the landscape.

As Picasso and Braque recognized, Cézanne's method enabled him to create a volumetric space or sculptural presence that is not tied to conventional representation, and movement that is not "movement through" or passage. For Stein, the immanence of Cézanne's landscapes presented a spatial model for replacing narrative and descriptive aspects of theatrical illusionism with an expressive dimension in composition. The quality of immanence in landscape plays represents a novel method in Stein's work to address her ambition from her earliest plays onward to replace narrative and dramatic action with the "essence of what happened" and thereby resolve "the problem of time in relation to emotion" that troubled her in conventional plays (*LIA* 261, 251). Immanence imparts the "essence of what happened" as an effect of composition and as presentational force.

As we will see in the experiment of *Lend A Hand*, the spatial homology results in an oddly expansive time sense, one of duration without dramatic development, as though time hovered or were suspended in the unfolding space of the text.[58]

Stein breaks with conventional illusionism by means of the paratactic repetitions that make a woman appear in the "landscape" of her play. In place of narrative sequence, the play proceeds through paratactic accumulation, rehearsing prior questions or assertions with variation until a given passage builds to a sense of satisfaction or exhaustion.

> Fourth religion Does she furnish a house as well.
> Fourth religion Are grasses grown and does she observe that the others remove them. Are grasses grown four times yearly. Does she see the grasses that are grown four times yearly. Does she very nearly remove them. Does she remove them and do they very nearly grow four times yearly. Does she as she sees some one does she advance and does she very nearly remove the green grasses that grow nearly four times yearly. In this country they do.
> Third religion Does she very nearly or does she see the green grasses grow four times yearly. Does she remove them or does she know that they do grow four times yearly. Does she see some one as she advances or does she kneel there where the water is flowing or does she furnish a house as well. Does she nearly remove them.
> Second religion Do they see the grasses grow four times yearly and do they remove them and do they advance and see some one and do they touch it and do they lose it and do they see them grow almost four times yearly nearly four times nearly. (*UK* 173–4)

Assertions so reiterated concerning furnishing a house or advancing are rendered impersonal, and Stein's method of presentation flaunts the artifice of the action. These assertions clearly don't advance a narrative—they advance a particular style. The stacking of layers and layers of possible action accrues density as the play unfolds. This layering may draw on the method of the portraits Stein wrote mainly between the years 1908 and 1911, including the portraits of Picasso and Matisse that joined her name with Cubism for the first time when these were published in *Camera Work* in 1912. The early portraits typically develop through the repetition of key phrases tellingly modified by subtle variation, and, as in *Lend A Hand*, this method creates marked spatial effects. The Picasso portrait begins:

> One whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were certainly following was one who was

> charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was certainly completely charming.
>
> Some were certainly following and were certain that the one they were then following was one working and was one bringing out of himself then something. Some were certainly following and were certain that the one they were then following was one bringing out of himself then something that was coming to be a heavy thing, a solid thing and a complete thing. (*SR* 142)

Stein achieves "Cubist spatial energies" in portraits of this early style, as Charles Altieri has explained, through repetitions and variations that create semantic heft; through the "intricate interrelationships" of sentences whereby "meanings appear to lock together, like facets turning in a four-dimensional space"; and in their use of grammar as an "implicit scenic background."[59] Likewise, the complex layering of questions and assertions in *Lend A Hand* creates a spatial illusion formed by the relation of the assertions as if these materialized and were suspended in the space they appear to occupy. There are other formal similarities between the early portraits and the first landscape play as well. In Altieri's analysis, Stein achieves a complex portrait of Picasso by means of shifting viewpoints, either by complicating the sequence of its "simple two-sentence structure" or by changing perspective from the "one" followed to the "some" following.[60] To some extent, Stein replays this method in the fugal, multi-dimensional perspective generated by the four religions in *Lend A Hand*. But there are important differences as well. The play makes a greater rupture with conventional representational practices than the early portraits, as Stein mines theatrical illusionism for all it's worth to get the effects she's after.

I began by claiming that with this play Stein is "world-making," and to support this I have to explain how she handles illusionism, the devices by which worlds are ordinarily made. Stein creates the special effects of the landscape play by revealing the play *to be a play* at every moment: such improbable and impossible scenarios can only exist in a play. Surely we are invited to "see" a woman in the landscape and the pastoral tone of the play depends to some extent on her presence and the grass that (may or may not) grow "nearly four times yearly." But the play is not "about" the woman and her choice of religion in any ordinary way. Stein's method is indifferent to details of place or character that would be distinguishing

characteristics in a conventional play. This is similar in effect to the way in which Cézanne's hatch mark technique, applied to every subject equally, renders objects of the painting equivalent. As Richard Shiff explains, "One and the same mark was as effective in animating a composition of bathers as in articulating the bends, angles, and planes of a still life."[61] In Stein's play, nothing given remains constant or becomes figural in relation to other movement. The four religions whose questions initially form the play's framework become in turn elements of the play themselves, speaking in the first person and themselves undergoing the provisional action of the play. The woman emerges and becomes a palpable presence not by means of descriptive or narrative illusionism but through increasingly complex layers of questions about whether she "advances" or is "led." These are elements in a play of movement and stillness that has been aptly likened to "choreography."[62] In her unrelenting focus on the operation of framing devices and modalities of presentation, Stein reveals the devices of theatrical illusionism to be just so many ways of making a play.[63]

The dominant effect of the play, the effect it performs obsessively, is the perpetual effort to align elements relative to one another—the woman "advancing" or "kneeling" while the four religions remain in place or also advance—combined with dogged correction of each of its statements. "Are grasses grown four times yearly" (or not) and does "she see" the grasses, and "does she remove them," and so on (173). Terribly awkward phrasing about attachment, such as "First religion attaches it first religion attaches it" (171), reveals this preoccupation with the "mechanics of illusionism," the set of devices or the apparatus that joins things, in this case in lateral relation.[64] Later passages describe the relation of elements that she may "pass" or that she "surpasses," those that may be "folded" (177) or that "can be added" or "added to" (179). It is a method of doing and undoing, always leaving open the possibility of revising or retracting the report of an action or aligning it with another. This renders the action entirely potential or abstract, and in place of developing action the play evokes an illusion of spatial dimension through the dense relations that develop in the layering that comprises a particular episode and in the relation of one episode to another. This preoccupation with the alignment of shifting assertions is a verbal approximation of the spatial dimensions Cézanne achieves through color modulation: "The sense of these color patches rests on their juxtapositions and their alignments one with another, so that they imply not only volumes but axes, armatures at right

angles to the chromatic progressions which state the rounded surfaces of forms."[65]

Stein achieves volumetric effects as a result of the odd way in which scenes appear, expand, and dissolve in the play. In her early portraits, the placement of a word made all the difference in meaning, indeed the portraits form by means of subtle differences in the sense of words as they shift in grammatical function. The grounds for asserting "certainly" become less certain in the Picasso portrait, for example. But in *Lend A Hand*, neither word order nor the sequence of reported actions seems to matter. The exaggerated method of reiteration is systematic, but not in the service of advancing plot or dramatic action. The goal, as in Cézanne's landscape painting, is to establish an impression of space as an effect of a unified compositional field. In the play, Stein creates surface homogeneity through the repetition of paratactic questions much as Cézanne achieves compositional unity through the repetition of color and the use of vertical brushstrokes. Individual questions or assertions are not independently meaningful, nor is their sequence developmental or narrative. The unrelenting focus of the method is on the hinging of statements, the near-material effect of their articulation. Negations are not final, they may not even be negations; in the developing landscape everything (and nothing) is possible.

> First religion Does she almost see the grasses grow four times yearly does she see the green grasses grow four times yearly and is she nearly kneeling beside the water where the water is flowing. Does she touch it and does she remove it and does she see the green grasses grow nearly four times yearly. Does she see some one as she advances and does she kneel by the water is she kneeling by the water where the water is flowing. I do not think so. She is feeling that the green grasses grow nearly four times yearly. (*UK* 174)

Bands of similarly phrased assertions both constitute the developing homogeneous surface and create pronounced spatial effects as one band of assertions meets another. The illusion of space in Stein's play results from the elaborate articulation and co-penetration of these bands much as Cézanne creates spatial dimension as an effect of color modulation—"an effect of pleated surfaces like folding screens arrayed across the plain." As in Cézanne's use of color patches, what matters in Stein's play are the elaborate relations that accrue between statements even as these remain discrete, "relationships of affinity and contrast, the progression from tone

to tone in a color scale, and the modulations from scale to scale."[66] In the play, Stein creates spatial impressions as well as impressions of movement by means of the complex relations developing among shifting and multiple possibilities in statement, including affirmation or negation, declaration or query, shifts in subject, as well as the shifting senses of modifiers as these exchange places. Questions concerning "grasses grown four times yearly" are modified in phrasing such as "nearly four times yearly" (173) and further modified still in assertions concerning the woman's position, "is she nearly kneeling" (174). In a method approximating that of Cézanne's hatch marks, the sense of each assertion is indeterminate and non-representational; assertions instead enter into an intricate set of localized relations among neighboring statements and across the composition.

In making the painterly homology, I mean to suggest that Stein sets each statement into relation with others by treating it materially as though the statement were an individual mark or brushstroke in imitation of Cézanne's mark-by-mark technique. No doubt this will seem a rather mechanistic analogy, and one that ignores (as Stein did) that a sentence is not a brushstroke. Ultimately, however, Stein's homology depends less on whether she can imitate discrete painterly methods in a verbal medium, and more on her ability to interpret Cézanne's method so as to achieve similar overall compositional effects. The most striking aspect of the play is the emergence of the woman in the space of the play without dramatic development, and this Stein achieves as a direct result of successfully imitating Cézanne's ability to create spatial dimensions without conventional representation. None of the play's individual assertions need be determinate so long as in composition their articulation renders a quality of immanence from which the woman can appear to emerge. This was the force of Cézanne's method according to Merleau-Ponty, "it is Cézanne's genius that when the over-all composition of the picture is seen globally, perspectival distortions are no longer visible in their own right but contribute, as they do in natural vision, to the impression of an emerging order, of an object in the act of appearing, organizing itself before our eyes."[67] Likewise, Stein creates a volumetric dimension in the text by means of distortion, holding open a space for contradictory emotions and implausible configurations to exist, and it is in this space that the woman materializes. She emerges as a result of the impression of immanence forcefully conveyed by the overall composition of the play, much as Mont Sainte-Victoire emerges and exists in Cézanne's painting as an expression of compositional unity.

Drawing on the title of the collection Stein had just completed, *Geography And Plays,* we might ask, what is the geography or topography of this landscape play? As I have suggested, Stein's first landscape play seems a multidimensional elaboration of her initial "simple two-sentence" portrait method: the four religions reiterate assertions of similar phrasing which together form a tableau, and each tableau is itself only one of many such tableaux. A new tableau forms as the four religions introduce new terms into rotation, gradually replacing the previous set of terms. But what is the relation of the many tableaux in the play overall? In the opening pages of the play, questions concerning advancing and leading are displaced first by questions concerning attachment, and then by questions about furnishing a house, followed by questions concerning the grass growing. Evidently, the tableaux are episodic rather than developmental, and if they compose a space, which I think they do, how do we visualize their relation in space? Do we imagine that an individual tableau is formed, elaborated, and dissolved only to be replaced by another that emerges in the same "space," or that variations on the individual tableau, each slightly different than the previous, hang in the contiguous space of the developing landscape, stretching outwards in a line to infinity like a panorama or mural? Or, perhaps that there is only ever one scene, "beginning again and again," and the play demonstrates the kind and amount of iteration necessary to form the pictorial surface for this scene, building up sufficient volume through dense layering so that the scene will appear to materialize (*SR* 499). To put it simply: do we move to the next scene or do we begin again?

I don't think we can answer this question with any finality because there are no fixed reference points from which to mark perspective, but what really matters is what Stein manages to make of this indeterminacy in the very structure of the play. The woman appears in the play with a quality of revelation, as though she were revealed through the fugal structure of the four religions, revealed through the simultaneous and varied possibilities that instantiate her presence. This revelation is the indescribable aspect of the play, it cannot be localized and yet it is also the feature that impresses itself upon the reader most forcibly. It is conveyed through the expressive dimension that Stein creates in the play, replacing theatrical illusionism with the "essence of what happened." And, in contrast to the style of the early portraits in which the interlocking of gerundive sentences tends to create a cramped, closed space, the quality of revelation and affir-

mation expressed in the play occurs in a space that seems to be filled with air and light.

This is the play's great achievement and, as I hope to have made evident, it is this quality of immanence that makes *Lend A Hand* a landscape play. To summarize its methods, then, the play imparts a quality of immanence by creating intensive and interrelated compositional properties. One method is to make a developing scene appear to spread laterally, in imitation of a painterly mark-by-mark technique, simultaneously creating the space it will fill. This spatial dimension of the text combined with our inability to determine with any certainty how ensuing scenes relate means also that figures come into view at an indeterminate distance from the viewer and from the four religions, the play's unstable frame. The multiple and shifting perspectives of the four religions perpetually widen or close the distance between elements on view, complicating the relation of figure to ground or of foreground to background. We might expect that properties of the text that evoke a spatial dimension are those that most strongly suggest immanence. In the play, this is a depthless space, but one that nonetheless conveys sufficient plasticity so that the woman can be seen to advance, to kneel, to prepare, and to stay.

This seems necessary for what Stein had in mind, but more critical still for creating and sustaining the quality of immanence is the play of movement and stillness. There are several kinds of movement at work: a gentle to-and-fro motion of figures "advancing" as toward the picture plane; a lateral unfurling of proximate scenes emerging and fading; and an impression of arrested motion or stillness when a scene comes to completion. It is only when Stein evokes movement within the space she has also created that she shows the space *as space* to occupy, much as in Cézanne's painting "the spatial structure vibrates as it is formed."[68] Movement as an intensive property of the composition is the real reward of this highly worked structure insofar as it allows Stein to convey the "essence of what happened" as a compositional effect and therefore resolve the discontinuity in the viewer's experience. As she later explained in relation to *Four Saints In Three Acts*, "the movement in it was like a movement in and out with which anybody looking on can keep in time" (*LIA* 269).

Experiments with movement in space have consequences for time sense as Stein well knew. Ultimately, Stein's interpretation of Cézannean immanence depends upon the play's expression of a peculiar time sense. Describing Cézanne's *Mont Sainte-Victoire* of the Philadelphia collection, the art historian Max Raphael has analyzed the way in which the color

modulation which shapes spatial dimension eliminates "the perception of time" for viewers.

> Let us consider the nearest plane: a dark area made up of various violets and greens. One color (violet) is decomposed into a warm (reddish) tone and a cold (bluish) tone; the first comes forward, the second recedes. This creates a tension which sets these tones apart yet relates them to each other, so that they seem to belong to distinct layers although there is no perceptible space between them. The number of layers employing the same color varies, but whether the contrast involves two or more layers, our actual perception is one not of movement but of tension. In consequence, perception of time is eliminated from our perception of three-dimensionality; or, to be more exact, we do not perceive time as elapsing while we become aware of a multiplicity of layers.[69]

In a similar manner, Stein evokes a pronounced atemporal quality by imparting a sense of duration that does not seem to transpire, but occurs with the immediacy associated with simultaneity. This achievement carries over from her experiments in the love poems where both the expression of continuity and immediacy were desirable. Assertions or questions in the play are worded in the present tense or future conditional, yet nothing *happens* in the present moment because the many possibilities proposed are so thoroughly vetted and often cancelled. While they don't determine action or tell a story, the reiterated assertions, each set related to the next and yet discrete, impart a sense of duration that accords with lived experience. When rendered lateral to others, assertions made in the present tense do not become past relative to proximate statements, they seem instead to persist in an eerie suspension of time. Stein not only arrests "theatrical time," but she creates a novel expression of time sense that combines a startling sense of immediacy with a sense of duration that does not depend upon the passage of time. This is the time sense of immanence, and, because it is an expression of composition rather than dramatic illusionism, viewers of the play can "keep time" with the affective tone of the play, an expression in this play of quiet affirmation.

The combined effects of time and space make the play a self-contained "world" with the autonomy of modern painting Stein so admired, and this perhaps helps account for the repeated instances of the word "furnish" in the play. It appears first as the possibility that the woman will "furnish a house" (171), later as "[f]urnish the religion" (199), and later still as "do

you fairly furnish a reason" (205). Without putting too much pressure on a single word, the problem Stein sets out to solve is how to "furnish" a play as a picture plane or landscape. Artaud wrote, "but theater resides in a certain way of furnishing and animating the air of the stage."[70] With this bid to "furnish" the play, we are not so far from its metaphorical structure. What the revelation of the play enacts—or, the series of revelations each time the woman emerges anew—is the emanation of choice freed of the accidents of particulars. It is a valiant and I think for the most part successful effort to render the willingness to inhabit the world (to "furnish" a house or a reason) as the articulation and expression of an unfurling picture plane. No doubt this will seem an overly poetic claim, but to test its validity, readers need only compare the first part of the play with the second. Shifting from a focus on sight to sound, the play seems to direct our attention from visual impressions of the woman and setting to aspects of her affective state. Or so it seems. But the string of rhymes in passages that follow is actually thin gruel compared to the subtle range of emotion conveyed in the first part of the play through formal means. The following is characteristic:

> First religion Can you refuse me can you confuse me can you amuse me can you use me. She said can you. Sweet neat complete tender mender defend her joy alloy and then say that. (186)

The simple statement that emerges, "[s]he will stay, she will not leave she will say she will stay," is anticlimactic now that we have seen this intention take form in the opening pages of the play (193). I don't mean to fault Stein for this unevenness in the play; on the contrary, I take it that the pronounced differences in style between roughly the first and second halves of the play—differences that any reader must observe—reveal Stein's experiment in progress. By dividing "things seen" from "things heard" she tests whether sight or sound contributes most to the emotional impact of the play and therefore to the disarming sense that one is "out of sync" with its dramatic action. The surprising discovery of this play is that experiments with the visual dimension are more vivid, presumably eliciting more emotional response, than experiments that emphasize sound properties.

What Stein saw in the landscape of the Provence region was composition, and for her *composition* was always that of painting, whether landscape or still life. With the landscape homology, she grasped a new approach for radically restructuring the play as a prospect, a space comprised by the

unfolding of accordion-like motion. By imitating the immanence Cézanne achieves, Stein creates a landscape play in which heightened artifice makes events of the play take shape and seem to materialize before our eyes.

To sum, in a series of linked texts, Stein experiments with evoking a spatial dimension in order to address problems of composition involving time sense. The love poems were the first inkling that mapping extensive arrangements and multiplying "places" might be a way to achieve directness and immediacy in the poem while yet communicating a shared history. In her first landscape play, Stein creates a palpable spatial dimension in which to render the impression of movement. What is landscape for Stein at this juncture? She sustains the paradox that landscape is both there (it exists and endures without a viewer) and is constructed through viewing. In the play, Stein uses the four religions to create the impression of a framed space, and simultaneously reveals that this space depends on framing, a constructive activity. The result is that the play conveys an odd immanence: scenes are both unfurling, and yet seem to exist and persist with the presentational force that Stein associated with landscape that is "there."

Stein carries over her methods for creating immanence from the first landscape play to "An Elucidation," which readers will remember follows the landscape plays in the sequence of composition. Stein wrote "An Elucidation" either at the end of her stay in St.-Rémy (as she later remembered) or on her return to Paris. Borrowing the techniques of her landscape plays, in "An Elucidation" Stein makes sense an expression of compositional relations and formation. The text imparts the implacable force of immanence we recognize from *Lend A Hand*, and this gives explanation the immediacy of apprehension, of discovery or insight. We are thwarted if we read Stein's play for conventional drama; the *play is the landscape* she has created with its properties of expressive movement. Similarly, we are baffled if we seek an explanation *of something* in "An Elucidation." She uses the landscape homology as the means to hold open a space for sense to transpire as an event of the text that is ceaselessly forming. Much as a woman emerges by means of elaborate paratactic accretion in *Lend A Hand*, explanation cannot be paraphrased or derived from a substitutive chain in "An Elucidation." Explanation proves an elusive and ineffable event that is expressed as relations of the text come into contact, and enter into further contacts in other series. That the woman emerges in the play shows there to have been a landscape in which she can emerge; likewise, the connections among series that cross "An Elucidation" con-

stitute the composition as space in which a point of contact shows as contact. Stein demonstrates that in place of a logical ordering of primary and secondary order statements, making connections that skim the surface of the text is making sense.

We can conclude that "An Elucidation" is nonsense, or that Stein attempts with this spatial homology to do something that writing, a linear art, simply cannot be made to do. These are easier conclusions to accept than to grant that Stein's explanation proceeds on a non-rationalist basis. The rewards of reading "An Elucidation" in the series of Stein's experiments with the landscape homology is that now we can recognize the implications for knowledge of her endeavor to sustain the paradox in landscape. In *Lend A Hand*, a framed space would appear to be necessary to register movement, but, as I have argued, the impression of space emerges as a consequence of movement. Spatial dimension is both "there" in the pronounced quality of immanence imparted and it is also "not-there," insofar as it is an effect and shaped by movement. In "An Elucidation," Stein renders knowledge with similar immanence and presentational force. We do not begin with premises and "arrive at a conclusion." The statements that compose "An Elucidation" cannot be displaced by second-order statements in the hierarchical and substitutive methods of explanation. Stein is making sense on a radical model of dynamic expression that requires space since knowledge is an activity that transpires through the relations among equivalent terms. To echo Gowing on Cézanne's methods, perhaps readers are not altogether ready for an epistemology that so upends our expectations.[71] We want to *grasp an understanding*, *take hold of an idea,* or *see the pieces fall into place*. Instead, on the landscape homology, places do not hold and explanation is elusive, in constant motion, and nowhere localized. We might say that explanation rushes past, but past what? I have claimed that "An Elucidation" imparts the immanence Stein learned to create in her first landscape play, but for expression to be truly dynamic it must move without requiring markers to move past. *Lend A Hand* was only the first of Stein's landscape plays, and she proceeds in series by testing the various configurations of figure–ground and framing that the landscape homology suggests. In order to understand how Stein creates a quality of intensive movement that she will deploy for the expression of sense in "An Elucidation," we must read on in the compositional sequence.

Notes

1. In the manuscript, Stein wrote the subtitle "Studies in Description" below the heading title "Food." As Seth Perlow observes, in a letter providing the title *Tender Buttons* to Donald Evans, the publisher, "[Stein] also makes clear that she had considered 'Studies in Description' as a subtitle for the entire work but that it should be omitted, in favor of the three section headings," in *Tender Buttons*, *The Corrected Centennial Edition*, ed. Seth Perlow (San Francisco, California: City Lights Books, 2014), 95. Subsequently cited as *TB* in the text.
2. Marjorie Perloff has summarized the tendency of critics to treat the titles of *Tender Buttons* as "purposely misleading" and the pieces as "abstract" or "non-representational," in *21st-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics*, 66–68.
3. Perloff, "'A Fine New Kind of Realism': Six Stein Styles in Search of a Reader," in *Poetic License,* 155. See also Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 43, and Rachel Blau DuPlessis on the "semi-descriptive meditation" of *Tender Buttons*, "Woolfenstein, the Sequel," in *Primary Stein: Returning to the Writing of Gertrude Stein*, eds. Janet Boyd and Sharon J. Kirsch (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), 38.
4. Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations*, 42.
5. "A Transatlantic Interview—1946," in *A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Robert Bartlett Haas (Los Angeles, California: Black Sparrow Press, 1973), 25.
6. In her lecture "Poetry and Grammar," Stein writes "[a]nd so for me the problem of poetry was and it began with Tender Buttons to constantly realize the thing anything so that I could recreate that thing" (*LIA* 331). Stein wrote admiringly of Cézanne's efforts to create a "direct relationship to the object" in her notebooks (NB-A 14), quoted in Jayne Walker, *The Making of a Modernist*: *From Three Lives to Tender Buttons* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), xviii.
7. Crary, *Suspensions of Perception,* 298 and 299–300.
8. Stein, "A Transatlantic Interview—1946," 25.
9. Lyn Hejinian, "Language and Realism," one of "Two Stein Talks" in *The Language of Inquiry*, 101.

10. Ibid., 93.
11. Stein recognized that *Tender Buttons* relies on nouns despite her attempts to resist the noun: "I struggled I struggled desperately with the recreation and the avoidance of nouns as nouns and yet poetry being poetry nouns are nouns" (*LIA* 331).
12. The much quoted remark is from a 1905 letter Cézanne wrote to Emile Bernard in which he describes the desire "to produce the image of what we see while forgetting everything that has appeared before our day," quoted in Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 282. See Crary's discussion of Cézanne's "will to forget," 287–89. Stein, *Picasso* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959; original publication in French, Librairie Floury, 1938), 15. Subsequently cited as *P* in text.
13. Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 300.
14. Ibid., 39–40.
15. Ibid., 12.
16. Crary concludes that by the 1850s, studies of the eye resulted in "a reformulation of how a subjective visual field came into being: not through an instantaneous intake of an image but through a complex aggregate of processes of eye movement that provisionally built up the appearance of a stable image," 290.
17. Helmholtz's calculation of the speed of nerve transmission "astonished people by showing how *slow* it was," Crary, 310. Crary cites Helmholtz's discovery as another example of the mounting scientific evidence that perceptual experience is not instantaneous or seamless.
18. Ibid., 148, 24, 12–3.
19. Ibid., 26.
20. Ibid., 27.
21. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, quoted in Crary, 14.
22. Crary, 17.
23. For a discussion of Stein's experiments on processes of attention, see Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation*, 225–6.
24. See, for example, Stein's discussion of the fragmentary and constructed nature of perception in her monograph on Picasso: "Really most of the time one sees only a feature of a person with whom one is, the other features are covered by a hat, by the light, by clothes for sport and everybody is accustomed to complete the whole

entirely from their knowledge, but Picasso when he saw an eye, the other one did not exist for him" *(P* 15).

25. Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 213–4.
26. Bowers has observed that like *Tender Buttons*, these early plays explore the mode of definition in "*They Watch Me as They Watch This,"* 8. Other critical studies of Stein's plays included in: Isabelle Alfandary, "Page-Landscapes in the Theater of Gertrude Stein," in *Reflective Landscapes of the Anglophone Countries*, ed. Pascale Guibert (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi Publishing, 2011), 257–270; Arnold Aronson, *American Avant-Garde Theatre: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Sarah Bay-Cheng, *Mama Dada: Gertrude Stein's Avant-Garde Theater* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Marianne DeKoven, *A Different Language: Gertrude Stein's Experimental Writing* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); Leslie Atkins Durham, *Staging Gertrude Stein: Absence, Culture, and the Landscape of American Alternative Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Ulla E. Dydo, *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises, 1923–1934*; Elizabeth Fifer, *Rescued Readings: A Reconstruction of Gertrude Stein's Difficult Texts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992); Franziska Gygax, *Gender and Genre in Gertrude Stein* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998); Lyn Hejinian, "Grammar and Landscape" in *The Language of Inquiry*, 105–30; Bettina Knapp, *Gertrude Stein* (New York: Continuum, 1990); Shirley Neuman, "Would a viper have stung her if she only had one name?" in *Gertrude Stein and the Making of Literature*, ed. Shirley Neuman and Ira D. Nadel (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988); Dinnah Pladott, "The Semiotics of Post-Modern Theatre: Gertrude Stein," in *Approches de l'opéra/Approaches of the Opera*, ed. André Helbo (Paris: Didier, 1986); Betsy Alayne Ryan, *Gertrude Stein's Theatre of the Absolute*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984); Marc Robinson, *The Other American Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Yvonne Shafer, "Gertrude Stein (1874–1946)" in *American Women Playwrights, 1900–1950* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995).
27. Gertrude Stein, *Geography And Plays* (New York: Something Else Press, 1968; original edition 1922), 315. Subsequently cited in the text as *G&P*.

28. Edith Sitwell, "Miss Stein's Stories," review in *The Nation and The Athenaeum* (July 14, 1923) in *The Critical Response to Gertrude Stein*, edited by Kirk Curnutt (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), 25–6. Chad Bennett treats Stein's play *Ladies' Voices* (1916) as an example in the conversation plays of queer innovation in the use of gossip and the gossip figure, "'Ladies' Voices Give Pleasure': Gossip, Drama, and Gertrude Stein," *Modern Drama* 53, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 311–331.
29. See Bowers's discussion of *Mexico* in "*They Watch Me as They Watch This*," 15–17. Bowers emphasizes Stein's "subversion" of reference, the resultant object status of words, the restricted use of verbs and her apparent interest in the look of certain words, the "orthography" of the word *Mexico*. While I agree that the voice plays are not shaped by conventional plot, action, or character development, it seems inaccurate to claim as Bowers does that the plays "suggest that there is no nonlinguistic world, that the world exists only when word of it is written or uttered" (23). By comparison, the landscape plays of the 1920s are far more inventive than the voice plays in their world-making procedures.
30. In an article focused on the performance of sound in the voice plays, Johanna Frank contends that Stein distinguishes voices from bodies (those of viewers and actors) in ways that disrupt conventional expectations of embodiment, identity, character, and action: "[w]hile the voice may be disembodied, the word evokes the embodiment of an unnamed voice," in "Resonating Bodies and the Poetics of Aurality; Or, Gertrude Stein's Theatre," *Modern Drama*, 51:4 (Winter 2008) 513.
31. This biographical detail about the Lend A Hand Society appears in Stein's *Everybody's Autobiography* where she associates it with movement and with the inactivity she has characterized elsewhere as saint-like being. The full passage reads: "I am also fond of saying that a war or fighting is like a dance because it is all going forward and back, and that is what everybody likes they like that forward and back movement, that is the reason that revolutions and Utopias are discouraging they are up and down and not forward and back. Look right and not left look up and not down look forward and not back and lend a hand. That used to be called a Lend a Hand Society when I went to school and all the children had to write once a week when the society inside the school met, how they had

lent a hand, most of them had an easy time, they could mind the baby or watch the cow or cut the wood or help their mother. Nobody wanted us to do these things and I and my brother who spent our time at home mostly eating fruit and reading books, never could remember how we had lent a hand. I wonder. I can still see the school room and hear the things read out and how that neither I nor my brother had lent a hand" (*EA* 86).

32. The Lend A Hand Society, a non-profit organization that began in the 1870s as a small group movement, is still in operation providing financial and other forms of assistance to persons in need primarily in the Boston area. The motto appears on the Lend A Hand Society website. http://www.lend-a-hand-society.org. Accessed 6/1/16.
33. Critical interpretations based on thematic readings of elements of the play seem misguided in that they often ignore salient formal properties of the text and reach conclusions wholly unsupported by the composition. Linda S. Watts, for example, considers *Lend A Hand* and *Lucy Church Amiably* companion texts in which Stein "recasts the Bible in her own terms," and speculates about the potential for a "rich inner life" of the Chinese "character" in the play, *Rapture Untold: Gender, Mysticism, and the 'Moment of Realization' in Works by Gertrude Stein* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1996), 86. The figures in Stein's plays are not characters in a conventional sense for which we might imagine an "inner life."
34. See also Davidson's comments on landscape in a later text, *Stanzas in Meditation* (1932): "a landscape is a way of looking, a predisposition to see phenomena as they constellate a series of positions around a viewer" *Ghostlier Demarcations*, 57.
35. Hejinian, "Grammar and Landscape," 114.
36. Wendy Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance: The Literary Portraiture of Gertrude Stein* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 68.
37. Gertrude Stein to Virgil Thomson, March 30, 1927, YCAL, quoted in Richard Bridgman, *Gertrude Stein in Pieces* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 179.
38. T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 141. See also Richard Shiff on the painting's lack of illusionistic depth in *Cézanne and the*

End of Impressionism: A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 169.

39. Dydo describes the Cézanne portrait as a "verbal landscape," *SR* 427.
40. Leo Stein bought the collection's first Cézanne painting, *The Spring House* (c. 1879, Barnes Foundation) in 1903. The Cézanne lithographs Stein and her brother owned were *Bathers in Landscape* (c. 1890–97) and *Bathers* (1897). The most complete inventory of the Stein collection is the "Catalogue of the Stein Collections" by Robert McD. Parker in *The Steins Collect: Matisse, Picasso, and the Parisian Avant-Garde*, exhibition catalog, eds. Janet Bishop, Cécile Debray, Rebecca Rabinow (New Haven: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in association with Yale University Press, 2011), 394–457. Earlier lists include: *Four Americans in Paris: The Collections of Gertrude Stein and Her Family*, exhibition catalog, The Museum of Modern Art (New Haven, Connecticut: Eastern Press, 1970), and John Rewald, *Cézanne, the Steins, and Their Circle* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986).
41. Stein sold the *Bathers* painting in 1926 to Etta Cone, and it is now in The Cone Collection of The Baltimore Museum of Art. Cone purchased the *Bathers* lithograph from Gertrude and Leo in 1906. Leo sold the Cézanne *Group of Bathers* to Dr. Albert Barnes in 1915.
42. *Matisse Picasso*, exhibition catalog, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (London: Tate Publishing, 2002), 372.
43. Gottfried Boehm, "A Paradise Created by Painting: Observation on Cézanne's Bathers," in Mary L. Krumrine, *Paul Cézanne: The Bathers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 25.
44. Clark, 161.
45. Richard Shiff, "Lucky Cézanne (Cézanne *Tychique*)" in *Cézanne and Beyond*, exhibition catalog (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2009), 60. See also John C. Gilmour, "Improvisation in Cézanne's Late Landscapes" in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 58:2 (Spring 2000): 191–204.
46. F. Novotny, "The Late Landscape Paintings," in *Cézanne: The Late Work*, ed. William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977), 108.
47. Roskill, *The Languages of Landscape*, 4.

48. Yve-Alain Bois observes that "this type of violent denial of aerial perspective is frequent from the 1880s onward, notably in the first of the Sainte-Victoires," in "Cézanne: Words and Deeds," *October* 84 (Spring 1998): 32.
49. Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism*, 215.
50. Stein commented: "Cézanne conceived the idea that in composition one thing was as important as another thing. Each part is as important as the whole and that impressed me enormously" in *What Are Masterpieces* (New York: Pitman, 1970; original 1940), 98.
51. Erle Loran, *Cézanne's Composition: Analysis of His Form with Diagrams and Photographs of His Motifs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 25.
52. Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism*, 122.
53. Lawrence Gowing, "The Logic of Organized Sensations," in *Cézanne: The Late Work,* 68.
54. Ibid.
55. Art historians debate whether the color patches in paintings such as this one are representational and how much the use of color determines form. Since John Rewald photographed some of Cézanne's motifs, others have sought out the sites of his motifs in studies that generally find the paintings faithful to the physical landscape even if Cézanne has altered the perspective or colors. See Rewald, *Paul Cézanne* (London: Spring Books, 1959); Erle Loran, *Cézanne's Composition*; and Pavel Machotka, *Cézanne: Landscape into Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).
56. Gowing, "The Logic of Organized Sensations," 66.
57. Ibid.
58. For a discussion of the landscape plays and Bergson's concept of duration, see Sarah Posman, "Time as a Simple/Multiple Melody in Henri Bergson's Duration and Simultaneity and Gertrude Stein's Landscape Writing," in *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 45, no. 1 (March 2012): 105–120.
59. Charles Altieri, *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 241–2.
60. Ibid., 244.
61. Shiff, 64.

62. Sutherland, *Gertrude Stein: A Biography of Her Work*, 107.
63. Here I am echoing T.J. Clark's phrase, "ways of making a painting," in *Farewell to an Idea*, 180.
64. Questions about how things are attached or "joined" appear in many Stein texts of 1922–23.
65. Gowing, 66.
66. Ibid.
67. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 14.
68. Merleau-Ponty, 15.
69. Max Raphael, "The World of Art and the Model in Nature," in *The Demands of Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 21–22, and quoted in Yve-Alain Bois, "Cézanne: Words and Deeds," 40.
70. Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1958), 108.
71. Gowing, 66.

CHAPTER 4

Dissolving the Frame

While Stein stayed on in St.-Rémy through the winter and early spring of 1923, she wrote additional landscape plays in succession, beginning with *A List*, a play that has received significant critical attention, followed by *Capital Capitals* (*LIA* 306).[1] Although all are plays of what Stein called "the Saint Remy period," they are very different in style; *Capital Capitals* is light and lively whereas *Lend A Hand* is still and quiet (*LIA* 306). Reading *Lend A Hand* in the series of composition throws Stein's writing practices into sharp relief. Taken together the texts reveal how methodically she tested the effects of framing devices on the spatial dimension of a text and its qualities of movement. The landscape homology presents a set of reversible strategies for experiments with figure–ground relations and we can productively read the landscape plays in series by discovering how each instantiates figure–ground relations. As I claimed in my discussion of *Lend A Hand* in the previous chapter, Stein's initial gambit was to treat landscape as a homology for a framed space composed of varying perspectives. The impression of movement is imparted through a modulation in compositional formation in relation to a frame that is constantly forming. Evidently, the next step was simply to do away with the frame altogether and to attempt to convey intensive movement without the illusion of a frame. In "Why Are There Whites To Console" (1922), a long narrative piece Stein wrote after *Lend A Hand*, and in the play *Capital Capitals*, she dissolves the frame entirely.[2] In "Subject-Cases: The Background Of

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A Detective Story" (1923), a piece she may have written on her return to Paris, Stein resumes the experiment by reversing the "places" of foreground and background.[3] These texts are linked in a shared experiment through the playful reiteration of the idiom "to place" and their investigation of the role of parts in assigning places. And yet they are markedly different in style because experiments with the frame result in pronounced differences in movement: "Why Are There Whites" is a text remarkable for its light, busy movement, while by comparison, "Subject-Cases" slows movement to a virtual standstill.

Reading the landscape plays in the sequence of composition is an attempt to stay apace with Stein's unfolding experiment with the effects of frame and flux in the landscape homology and to interpret differences among the texts as differences in constituting an ongoing experiment. Landscape gave Stein a visual homology for evoking space, and for creating presentational force, but the ultimate reward was to impart a sense of movement within that compositional space that does not depend on fixed points. As aforementioned, this was a lifelong ambition for Stein, who wrote in a later lecture, "if the movement, that is any movement, is lively enough, perhaps it is possible to know that it is moving even if it is not moving against anything" (*LIA* 287).[4] The landscape plays are experiments with the relative positions of places and parts and therefore, when Stein destabilizes their customary relation, they are experiments in creating movement that "is not moving against anything." This quality of intensive movement becomes an aspect of Stein's concept of knowing and renders the sheer potential of novelty, of thinking that is not constrained by predicate logic, that is, the places and parts played by subjects and objects. When these are not fixed *in place* and operating according to their conventional roles, then new relations among elements may emerge, and the potential exists for something entirely new to transpire.

In what follows, I analyze Stein's methods for achieving intensive movement in "Why Are There Whites To Console" and *Capital Capitals* so as to show how these discoveries in creating flux inform her epistemology. I close the chapter with a close reading of "Subject-Cases," a text that I hope will persuade even the most skeptical reader that Stein systematically explored variations on a compositional experiment. "Subject-Cases" has proven baffling for critics, but from our perspective, its difficulty is of a piece with its part in her sustained painterly analogy. Evidently, the most extreme variation on painterly framing was to simply reverse the places

of figure and ground and Stein was willing to try this experiment despite its unsettling consequences for subjects. "Subject-Cases" is a critical text because it is here that we discover her most radical experiment in dispensing with predicate logic and the implications of her epistemology for subsequent experiments in portraiture. Therefore, the text is key to understanding the new approach to portraiture Stein developed in the landscape period when she resumed writing portraiture, a form that conventionally depends upon discerning subject from background.

When Parts Move Apart from Progression and Purpose: "Why Are There Whites To Console. A History In Three Parts" (1922)

"Why Are There Whites To Console. A History In Three Parts" begins with a wry pun on an automobile part, the transmission: "Clutch is a new word, clutch. Now remember what I said I said I was talking to you" (AFAM 198). That the word *clutch* should be "a new word," presumably because it refers in context to the car part, suggests that the excursion by car that ended in Stein and Toklas's prolonged stay in St.-Rémy will become a textual excursion, a matter of making familiar words new. On their excursion in Provence, Stein and Alice Toklas accompanied their friend Janet Scudder (1869–1940), an American sculptor, who planned to buy a house in the region. As a biographer notes, it was the first long trip Stein and Toklas made in "Godiva," their new Ford Model T, and Scudder and her friend (likely lover), Camille Lane, drove "in *their* new Ford."[5] We find many references to the motor trip in the text including much mention of coming and going, of distances traveled ("A mile a day") and of following one after another: "And in this way they apparently led the way./I cannot tell you how fond we are of Janet" (209, 215).

The restlessness of the text recalls Melanctha's "wandering" in *Three Lives*, to which it is obliquely related. In a letter to Sherwood Anderson that she wrote from home in Paris in September, Stein described "Why Are There Whites To Console" as "a sort of White Melanctha."[6] In *Melanctha*, one of the stories of *Three Lives* (1905), Stein explored how she might represent a character's fictive "wandering" by disrupting conventional linear narrative.[7] Or, perhaps the title refers obliquely to the brotherhood of *Pénitents Blancs*, their religious processions that Stein and Toklas may have witnessed during their stay, and the many ancient

churches known as *Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs* they may have seen in Les Baux, Avignon, Montpellier, or Vence. Driving their two Fords through the countryside of Provence, the friends made a small procession, and indeed the word "procession" recurs in Stein's work during these years. No doubt, she was intrigued by the difference between the words "procession" and "succession." Insofar as a procession recreates an original event—the first procession of the *Pénitents Blancs* began with Henry III in 1585—it is an example of Steinian insistence. The procession is enacted each year to celebrate the same occasion, but in recurring, it expresses the variation of repetition.

And yet again, perhaps the title question alludes to Stanford White, the American architect who was for many years the principal client for Scudder's work, commissioning her to make garden statuary for estates on Long Island.[8] The question may refer to artists who work on demand, but if so the reference is much complicated by subsequent references to persons, flowers, and the color value itself: "Of course I mean to color more white in that way" (214).[9] While biographical references are suggestive and may lead to productive inroads for reading, "Why Are There Whites" is not a conventional retrospective or a fictional narrative of the motor trip.

Instead, having signaled that she will proceed by parts ("clutch"), Stein dismantles the journey as a figure for narrative progression, by means of yet another figure for narrative, the machinery of its components (plot, character, action, and setting) working together as so many interlocking parts.[10] In nineteenth-century realist narrative these elements work in tandem, the parts making up a whole that in its operation results in linear momentum on a journey toward an endpoint. Conventional narrative is, so to speak, driven by events toward goals. Nineteenth-century realism, taken to its logical extreme by Flaubert, was empirical, even pseudo-scientific in its aims to mirror the complexity of the world, but that complexity was understood as ultimately ordered and knowable. Narrative digressions are digressions from linear progression toward closure. All road trips have a destination, all stories have an end, or according to critic Ellen Berry: "Realism does not simply express the empiricist urge to assemble data exhaustively; it must assemble this data into a meaningful totality—hence the importance of closure in realist novels, the point at which all potential contradictions, all challenges to the possibility of constructing this totalized picture, are resolved."[11] For Stein, the narrative illusion of "going someplace" is among its least interesting features because conventional

linear progression blocks intensive qualities of movement. Concerning her writing method, Stein rejects the journey analogy and observes, "As I say a motor goes inside and the car goes on, but my business my ultimate business as an artist was not with where the car goes as it goes but with the movement inside that is of the essence of its going" (*LIA* 305).

The composition of "Why Are There Whites" conveys a quality of incessant movement and of space that is not the result of dramatic development. Speakers and objects named in the piece seem oddly suspended in dimensions opened up by their appearance and circulation without assigned narrative purpose. Space exists in the text that has not been staged as space to move through or past. Stein achieves these effects largely through her violations of the hierarchies and relations ordinarily established by framing devices; the most apparent of these is the sheer number of its parts. Although the subtitle of the piece promises "A History in Three Parts," the text actually features nineteen parts. As subheadings of the text suggest, narrative parts may be subdivided infinitely ("Part 2 And A Half."/"Part 2 And Two Thirds") or simply repeated—there are ten subheadings titled "Part 3." Prevented from advancing narrative chronology or ordering sequence, the division into parts ceases to operate conventionally. There are no temporal cues by which to chart narrative progression in Stein's text and no reason to imagine that numbered parts follow one another in succession. Perhaps this is a new kind of "periodical" of discrete, self-contained units that might be reordered in any number of sequences: "Anybody can furnish to themselves and for themselves and anybody can be satisfactorily periodical./ I know exactly what I mean by a periodical" (207).

Stein achieves a unique quality of intensive movement in the text by pulling the frame into the picture. She parodies the directives of narrative framing devices that imply movement ("To come back to purposes"), that suggest connections ("Now attaching everything together"), or that seem to nudge the reader onward: "Now we point the way" (203, 202, 204). In doing so, she exposes the ways in which realist narrative guides the reader to closure. In Stein's text, metadiscursive phrases cease to function as framing devices for chronology or causality; instead, they float in the composition as unmoored imperatives, failing to advance narrative progression. Once Stein has obstructed the operation of parts of the text, she begins to mine the various senses of the word "part." In place of a realist fiction of *departures* and *partings* along a journey, Stein parses potential differences among the various senses of the words "part," "depart," and "apart." Rhyming adds

"cart," "start," and "heart" to the series: "If we move do we go. If they are apart do they go away together. If they are a part do they go away together" (210). In this teasing *a-part*, we may well hear the French expression *faire bande à part* ("to make a separate group of oneself"), a phrase Stein was likely to have picked up from her friends Matisse and Picasso who valued their independence from group movements.[12] The resulting text is a spreading surface that rather than advancing doubles back ceaselessly, generating the impression of movement entirely by sounding differences among the many senses of the word "part."

Part 4.

> To part to depart to prepare a part, to care to cart away all ones belongings all day, to start to have a heart to prepare a part to part to start to care to part to depart. No not in this union is there no strength. No. When Rose does not say no, when Rose does not go, when Rose has a pretty gold head, what do you say to go ahead, when Rose it has been said when Rose when I arose and when you arose, arise, do not decide do not decide what is settled do not decide, do not decide. Beside why do you not decide. Why do you not decide beside.
>
> Beside. (213)

Clearly, words in composition "arise" through their relation to other words rather than semantically: through rhyme schemes and anagrams (*Rose/a rose; head/ahead*), by means of homonyms ("One and won. She won"), by alliteration ("prepare a part"), or by instigating a new rhyme scheme (*decide/beside*). Of course, this kind of semiotic play is a commonplace of Stein's work; what we want to understand is how it advances the particular compositional task at hand. Word choice is not arbitrary. Where the proper name "Janet" introduces the phrase "plan it," we begin to notice that the language associated with narrative operations and organization—including *plans*, *preparation*, and *purpose*—becomes content that is similarly elaborated. Narrative conventions are disrupted when flattened; that is, when instead of framing the story, these words are drawn into the text. Rather than driving the plot or action of narrative, "Purposes. A narrative" becomes merely one in a series of mini-narratives that includes, "Pardon me. A narrative," "Agreement, a narrative," and "Come back. A narrative" (203, 204, 205). By means of this series, Stein examines what narrative purpose *does* to ordinary objects, and what such purposefulness assumes about knowledge and emotional states.

To come back to purposes.
Purposes, a narrative.
Color.
Coat
Careless
Countess
Climate
Cut
Climb
and
Care.
Purposes. A narrative.
She knew
She knew too.
Purposes. A narrative.
She came to see
She came to see me. (203)

In place of a purposive narrative, Stein introduces a narrative of "Purposes," making the operation itself the subject. Rather than advancing, the narrative is made to circle, to "come back to purposes." The content of the narrative is a list evidently generated by the letter "C," including words one can readily imagine might indicate purpose ("Cut," "Climb," and "Care"). Restricting herself to listing words according to what Roman Jakobson identified as the "axis of metonymy" (words grouped according to contiguous relationships in a process of combination as compared to selection), Stein has deliberately separated objects that would ordinarily be subjected to narrative purpose from purposeful investment such as "knowing" or interest. In this brief analysis, Stein demonstrates that narrative purpose constricts the pure potential of "words left alone," a liveliness and intensity she associated with "American writing" including advertising and road signs.[13] Or, to return to the terms of the text, she has replaced narrative "parts," the empty placeholders of organizational structure, with words that move *a-part* or as a *bande à part*, establishing their independence. Separating objects and purpose, she demonstrates that narrative purpose narrows the view: "She came to see" must take an object, "She came to see me" (203).

In contrast to the epistemological determinism of narrative with its conventions of discovery, disclosing or solving, Stein explores the nonpurposeful state of declarations, "She knew" or "She came to see." As a

result, nothing *takes place* and yet a great deal *happens* in "Why Are There Whites." Stuttering repetitions with variations of the title question "Why are there whites to condole to console" will remind us of the repetition of the title question, "Didn't Nelly And Lilly Love You," and of the accretive method of unanswered questions in *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions*. Reading forward to "An Elucidation," where Stein appeared poised to parse the difference between explain and elucidate, we recognize a similar strategy in "Why Are There Whites," where she teases: "To condole and to console. Who knows the difference" (216). But the semantic meanings of *console* and *condole* seem to me chiefly a red herring—we make no headway by making consolation a thematic key to interpretation. Within the composition, *console* and *condole* are terms in a developing series whose unfolding thwarts the *preparations* and *plans* of conventional narrative framework. Once introduced, "console" and "condole" become members of a series of words beginning with the prefix "con-" that spans the text and includes "console," "condole," "connect," "confidence," "constantly," and "conclude."

The series begins just before the passage quoted above and continuing on after: "Conversation please./Conversation to please./Conversation" (201). Once we recognize the place of *console* and *condole* in this series, we see that both differences and similarities are generative, and both are required to create surface effects. In one direction, the semantic differences between the words "conversation" and "console" are apparent, in another, their similarity and hence membership in a common series. This tension means we defer the semantic suggestiveness of "condolences" to take in the compositional totality as the unfolding series spills forward, spanning the text. The result of this unfolding series is a property of movement in the text that makes it impossible to fix progression in relation to place: rather than hierarchical in the organization of parts, or forward moving on the trajectory of a journey or storyline, movement in the text is both intensive and expanding, or "horizontal, contextual" as Rosmarie Waldrop has observed of Stein's method in general.[14]

Once she has displaced narrative purpose, Stein experiments with new models for compositional synthesis that will not foreclose formal possibilities for dynamic movement. In an ingenious solution that frames the challenge in terms of practice, she asks, "How can a narrative relate" (203). Modeling her experiment on the landscape homology, a structure of relations, Stein proceeds by exploring two senses of the word *relate*. In one sense, narrative *relates* a story, and its speakers engage in dialogue.

In another sense, to *relate* is to join elements of composition. This doubling of the word "relate" should take us back to the beginning of "Why Are There Whites" which began conversationally, "Now remember what I said I said I was talking to you" (198). Indeed, examining the composition as a whole, we now see that virtually every statement of the opening pages is the report of speech: types of speech acts, "A satisfactory dialogue and monologue" (198), and "examples of confession" (199); bids for clarification about what was said including "Did Rose say that she meant to diffuse to diffuse hope and reluctantly retain kindness" (199); or clarification about the use of a word, "the meaning of bewildering" (201), and observations about "Conversation," including, "If you please, every one repeats more than they said" (201). Even so, the effect is not greater responsiveness or reciprocity. Most often questions go unanswered, blocking narrative advancement and redirecting readers to the gathering surface yet again.

> Janet. What did you say.
> Rose. What did you say, Janet. (201)

Much of the action of the text consists in repeated and contradictory statements that emphasize speech acts.[15] Rose and Janet are not characters of the text in any ordinary way; they are voices positioned by particular sentences or as Stein writes elsewhere: "A character celebrated for the space of sentences" (210). There is no need to imagine a realist illusion for these figures, or, as the speaker wryly adds, "Sentences are not always spoken" (210).

> Janet said she walked suddenly everywhere and sat here and there and sat there and she said she sat here and she walked here and there and she stood there. She did not stand everywhere. What did she say. (201)

Since the dialogue is inconclusive, it is not clear that these are reports of conversations that "took place" in any ordinary way, and they do not advance the illusion of a fictional story. Much like the layering of questions in *Lend A Hand*, questions are not displaced by answers, and, the multiplicity of contradictory assertions suggests the ceaseless unfolding of choice and possibility in place of the foreclosure of narrative. Stein's attention to speech acts is an effort to abstract the operation of narrative—that it *relates* a story—without in fact telling a story. If she isn't bound to a

coherent, singular storyline, Stein can explore the range of feeling that might be conveyed by the wish to relate including desire, uncertainty, insistence, interest, or boredom. She has not only dispensed with a narrator who reports what was said but also makes the activity of relating itself comprise the text. Rather than a transparent frame or device, narrative relations come into view as an active effort to relate one term to another, and this perpetual *requesting* replaces the narrative quest.

Simultaneously, Stein examines the other sense of the word "relate," investigating how narrative joins elements of composition or demonstrates their connection. Must objects be put to narrative purposes in order to be related or might they be otherwise connected? In the series of subheadings titled "Purposes," Stein explores how narrative relates a list of unassociated objects.

> Purposes. A narrative.
>
> How can a narrative relate hairs to heads and Elizabeth to Elizabethans. How can it. How can it relate coats to hats and shoes to homes shrubs and houses. How can a narrative relate heights to shawls, ribbons to carpets and rest to cups. How can a narrative relate inches to inches and birds to veils and voices to carpets. How can a narrative relate Friday to Friday and plains to plains and saving to saving. How can a narrative relate pillows to pillows and white to white and buttons to buttons. How can a narrative relate sacks to sacks and ease to ease and meeting to meeting. How can a narrative relate recent attention.
>
> I will trade you. (203)

By and large, the success of this extraordinary passage is that Stein does not tip her hand as to whether she thereby praises or critiques the capacity of narrative to relate. Sustaining the ambiguity, she raises questions about both the capacity and limitations of narrative. Grouped as they are, the objects of the first few sentences suggest how narrative can relate such a surprising list as "inches," "birds," "veils," "voices," and "carpets": by counting (hairs on a head), by naming (Elizabeth), by locating in an historical period (Elizabethans), or by establishing proximity (shrubs and houses). But can narrative relate the ordinary objects of "recent attention" without diminishing their strangeness by subjecting them to purposes? Can it relate these objects so that they remain identical to themselves? I take it this is the point of asking, "How can a narrative relate pillows to pillows and white to white and buttons to buttons." The quiet offer to trade that ends the passage ("I will trade you"), much like Stein's earlier

interest in "exchanges" in "A Sonatina" and preceding short poems, is a bid for equivalence among the objects of "recent attention" in place of the substitutions entailed in narrative relations.

This model of equivalence has important implications for movement in the text. Although replete with bids to "come and stay" and to "come and go," there is no destination to speak of and no arrival. "Come again not come about," as Stein wrote elsewhere. Instead of narrative progression in a trajectory across time and space, we are perpetually turning and returning, through the doubling action of the series spanning the composition, through the iteration of speech acts, through the instantiation of equivalence among objects, and through the bid to look again and again until we can see the objects of "recent attention."

> When I see flowers I admire flowers.
>
> When I see flowers I plan flowers. When I see flowers I prepare flowers. When I see flowers I recall flowers. When I see flowers. How pleasant are flowers.
>
> How favorable are flowers to flowers.
>
> How far are there flowers.
>
> You see this is what interests me. I am interested in returning in returning I am interested in returning. (212)

Flowers remind the speaker of flowers seen at other times or places, but her interest in returning does not become nostalgic, and the sight of flowers simply leads to the sight of more flowers. Flowers *recall* flowers: the emphasis again is on the quality of intensive movement possible if these relations are extended through the exercise of figures of speech rather than truncated by descriptive purposes. Much of the success of the passage results from the movement Stein suggests without relying on story, and the remarkable range of feeling she creates within such a limited palette. Having blocked the framing devices of narrative by thoroughly exploring their operations, Stein creates dynamic movement and interest that does not depend on narrative purpose, or as she put it, "moving is in every direction beginning and ending is not really exciting" (*Narration*, 19). This accomplishment is all the more remarkable because the text is based on a road trip, a figure for purposeful, linear progression.

We pick up the thread linking the compositional experiment of "Why Are There Whites" to that of "An Elucidation" by noting the recurrence of phrasing and tuning our ear to recognize a similar tone. Much as she abstracts the wish to relate without relating something in "Why Are There

Whites" so too in "An Elucidation" Stein repeatedly insists that she has explained or will explain without explaining *something*. And, much as she uses the repeated bids to relate in "Why Are There Whites" in order to analyze the effects of narrative purpose on objects, in a similar way in "An Elucidation" Stein examines the effects of explanation on examples and explores a non-hierarchical alternative for making sense.

We recognize in "An Elucidation" many of the strategies Stein uses in "Why Are There Whites" to create a composition of equivalent elements: the non-hierarchy of terms (primary terms that become secondary in subheadings such as *Elucidate* or *Purposes*); efforts to block the displacement or substitution of one set of terms by another; deictic words that cease to act as placeholders; circulating series that add new members; correspondence among equivalent terms; and elision of the present time. When terms are equivalent, explanation becomes an intensive event of composition that depends on the relations among terms. Explanation doesn't fix examples in place but proceeds in the connections possible when all terms are equally in motion. Stein borrows the techniques to sabotage narrative purpose she uses in "Why Are There Whites" in order to block similar metaphors of journey or arrival underlying rationalist understanding. These are the assumptions implied in our expectation that explanation *comes to a conclusion* or in the caution, "Don't jump to a conclusion." Stein's insight that narrative need not be purposeful or conclusive in order to relate compositional elements leads to the discovery that explanation need not arrive. Just as "Why Are There Whites" ceaselessly relates its terms without purpose or conclusion, so too in "An Elucidation" Stein makes sense without arriving at a conclusion. We are accustomed to expect conclusions as if the destination of explanation were foretold, but for Stein, "where the car goes as it goes" was the least of her interests (*LIA* 305). The challenge in writing is to create the equivalent of dynamic motion ("the movement inside that is the essence of its going") that corresponds to the excitement of contingent and open-ended discovery. That the landscape homology should suggest a framed space was but one possibility. "Why Are There Whites," an intervening text in a series of landscape experiments, reveals that Stein continues the experiment with framing she proposed in *Lend A Hand* simply by creating movement without a frame. When this method persists in "An Elucidation," the implications for explanation and knowledge are radical. Explanation is the expressive activity occurring between and among elements as these come into contact, and the premium is to forge further connections rather than to fulfill or complete propositions.

When Places Are Parts: *Capital Capitals* (1923)

Reading on from "Why Are There Whites" in the sequence of composition allows us to account for the dramatic change in the style of the landscape play after Stein's initial experiment in *Lend A Hand*. We can now recognize that the method of "Why Are There Whites" to create motion without frame carries over to subsequent landscape plays. *Capital Capitals* is a short play, less than half the length of *Lend A Hand* and eleven printed pages in *A Stein Reader*. On Stein's prompting, in April 1927, the Duchesse de Clermont-Tonnerre commissioned Virgil Thomson to set the play to music for performance at her costume ball. The piece was performed again at a concert of Thomson's work at the Nouvelle Salle d'Orgue du Conservatoire the following year.[16] According to Bowers, Thomson's contribution to the collaboration, a musical score for four male voices with intermittent piano accompaniment, "emphasizes the essentially static nature of Stein's text. It is as though he were determined to show that, in spite of the music in the words, there is no music in the prose lines."[17] In addition to *Capital Capitals*, Thomson had set two of Stein's portraits to music before he suggested they collaborate on *Four Saints In Three Acts* in 1927.[18]

Capital Capitals begins with a light meditation: "We have often been interested in the use of the word capital" and the speaker considers various senses of the word including the designation of a seat of government in a state or country, financial capital, the capitalization of letters, and as an attribution of excellence, "capital" or "capitally" (*SR* 416). Stein observes that "a portion of France has four capitals" and names cities of the Provence region, Aix, Arles, Avignon ("[a]ll the capitals that begin with A"), as well as "[t]hose that begin with be Beaux" (416), which may be a reference to Les Baux. Her initial attention to the capital letter elicits mention of other capital cities including Barcelona, and "[t]hose that begin with m," including Marseilles and Mallorca (416). While we may be tempted to read the four capitals of the play as the four cities of Provence (and this is how Thomson assigned musical parts) in fact, the capitals are not so distinguished in the play. Instead, much as in *Lend A Hand* where the religions were enumerated but not named, in *Capital Capitals*, the speaking parts are simply enumerated, "First Capital," "Second Capital," and so on. Obviously, in omitting the proper name, Stein retains multiple senses of the word "Capital" to designate place or the placeholder for an unnamed place. The following passage confounds these uses:

Letters a b and m and capitals.

Capitals.

First Capital	Capital C.
Second Capital	Capital D.
Third Capital	Capital Y.
Fourth Capital	Capital J. (417)

As others have noted, Stein frequently structures texts of these years with sets of four: there are the four religions of *Lend A Hand Or Four Religions*, the four speakers whose names begin with the letter "M" in *A List*, and the four capitals of *Capital Capitals*.[19] This gives the pieces a fugal structure as I have observed in discussion of *Lend A Hand*. In her headnote to the play, Dydo claims that *Capital Capitals* is "assembled like a musical composition," and describes the play as a "kind of four-part madrigal" whose structure anticipates Thomson's musical scoring.[20] Perhaps inevitably, voices in space will be deemed musical, but the four-point structure clearly produces visual effects as well, and comparing the plays, we can see that Stein deliberately varies these effects in successive experiments. In *Lend A Hand*, the four speaking parts create a potent sense of space by evoking a framing device in a painterly homology or in relation to the four navigation points. The contrast is evident when one compares the method of *Capital Capitals*: here, too, Stein exaggerates the ordinal placing of four places, but now with the inverse effect of dismantling the four-point frame.

The play ranges widely over activities habitually performed by visitors and persons living in places, including the pleasures (and lack thereof) of coming again and of remaining. It includes mention of sights often seen in cities such as a castle, a park, nearby mountains, a river, bridges, and crowds (422–25). And it includes details related to work done, to hedges regularly "fastened," goods bought and sold, the passing of seasons, and the likelihood of being caught in the rain while "attending to baggage" (SR 424). Needless to say, however, the play does not present a coherent drama of life in a capital city.

In the play, the Capitals are both places and speaking parts. As a place, the Capital may be spoken about, but it may also speak as characters do in a conventional play. Obviously, this doubling thoroughly disrupts theatrical illusionism of establishing places and locating characters in a setting. The enumerated Capitals are listed in a column descending on the left-hand side of the page as are speaking parts typically (and as were the four religions in *Lend A Hand*). We quickly discern that they are speaking parts

when the First Capital says "Egypt" and the Second Capital says "Rabbit." While "Egypt" might be something said by another (presumably human) speaker about the Capital, perhaps to identify it as Egypt, this can't be the case when the Second Capital contributes "Rabbit" (417). In many passages such as the following, it is evident that the Capitals are speakers as were the religions in *Lend A Hand*.

Fourth Capital.	In the fourth place all four capitals have many shovels.
Fourth Capital.	Except me.
Third Capital.	Accept me.
Second Capital.	Expect me.
First Capital.	Except me.
First Capital.	I do I will.
First Capital.	Very still. (419)

However, in other passages, the Capitals seem also to be places spoken of, presumably by unnamed human speakers, insofar as the Capitals are characterized in relation to the needs and interests of persons. For instance, we read: "Fourth Capital. They said that they were safely there" (417) and "Fourth Capital. The fourth capital is the one where we do dream of peppers" (418). In other lines, the Capitals are accorded particular attributes which again, unless we imagine that the Capital speaks of itself in third person, does seem the attribution made by a person. For example: "First Capital. A capital is not easily undertaken nor is it easily aroused nor indeed is it impervious" (421). Following such passages, and throughout, the Capitals also assert speaking roles.

The result is a highly inventive speaking position in the play: even while they are speaking parts, the Capitals somehow also retain their roles as places that are spoken of. In her headnote for the text, Dydo claims that "[t]he capitals are machines that generate talk and become characters in the play" (415). I am uncertain what we gain by thinking of the Capitals as machines or as characters. What is interesting is the way in which they defy our expectations of both places and characters and therefore create wholly unexpected agency in the play. It is difficult to locate the source of the voices in the play. In some sequences, the personal pronoun "we" seems to range in commentary over the Capitals, describing experiences or impressions of the Capitals, and at times offering observations concerning the activities and desires of persons. But the "we" referred to is not identified or assigned speaking parts in the play. In other lines as I have noted, the Capitals speak directly for their own experience and individual capitals

engage others in exchanges. This is a curious estrangement and expansion of the field for the pronoun which is made to extend over persons and places.

We gain some ground by comparing this method to that of *Lend A Hand* so that the compositional experiment becomes evident. In *Lend A Hand* Stein experimented with the differing effects of sound and sight, investigating what each contributes to the illusion of a spatial dimension. The religions in *Lend A Hand* are speaking parts, but, as I observed, they are speakers obsessively occupied with what is *seen*—each one announcing it "sees someone advance." That religions should occupy the position we expect of characters is unusual, but, as I have suggested, when Stein exaggerates their contribution as divergent perspectives, she resolves the temporal lag for viewers that so troubled her in conventional plays by making the introduction of characters a part of the play's structure. Similarly, in *Capital Capitals*, Stein experiments with the contribution of parts of the play to its structure: if in *Lend A Hand*, she makes it difficult to distinguish between the religions as speaking parts and viewing positions, in *Capital Capitals* she frustrates our tendency to fix the Capitals as places since they are also speaking parts. We do not forget that the Capitals are places in the way that we may gradually forget that the speaking parts are religions in *Lend A Hand*. That the play should consist in speaking parts for capital cities is easy to dismiss as an absurdist gambit, but read in series we can see that it is a comical enactment of Stein's experiment with writing plays on a landscape homology and further investigation of the many variations on the idiomatic expression "a place for everything and everything in its place" that runs like a tagline through the texts of these years. When places are speaking parts in *Capital Capitals*, Stein investigates the role of parts and places in the landscape homology. Does a landscape on view or in composition depend on establishing places? Are these places because they remain in place and therefore in relation to other places? What happens when places instead act as moving parts? Where we might expect the places to ground the play, the surprising outcome is that the brisk exchanges of the Capitals put the abstract operations of places and placing on display.

In so elaborating on the senses of place Stein dismantles the pronounced impression of a spatial dimension in the play that she had created as the landscape of *Lend A Hand*. By comparison, in *Capital Capitals* she creates markedly different effects of lightness and movement in part because the four Capitals typically do not build on shared phrasings in the steadily

accretive method of *Lend A Hand*. Where the religions in *Lend A Hand* elaborated one another's exchanges often by alternating between affirming and negating a statement, the Capitals at times repeat and adapt one another's phrasing, but they do not develop intricate elaborations of these exchanges. Instead, they simply add additional and differing possibilities, sending the text on divergent tangents rather than composing a sustained field. The following is a typical exchange:

> Fourth Capital. I intend to learn to stay away.
> Third Capital. I intend to endeavor consolation. (422).

As a result, *Capital Capitals* does not develop the pronounced impression of a spatial dimension or a set of steadily developing tableaux. In granting speaking parts to places, Stein strips away the basis for setting or the illusion of action within a framed scene, and instead exploits the mechanism of such illusionism for its effects. She undermines illusionism merely by demonstrating that adding an article creates the suggestion of narrative which she can in turn deflate by omitting the article and making the place a speaking part instead:

> First a capital.
> Excitement.
> Sisters.
> First capital. (416)

Rather than develop the dramatic illusion of characters taking action, the play unfolds through grammatical action, listing and counting, varied senses of the word "capital," homonyms, and by means of odd pairings: "Strawberries and capitals" (417). Compared to the aggregative mode of *Lend A Hand*, here the tendency is to splinter and scatter. "First Capital" and "Capital One" both have speaking roles. Shifting from "first" to "one" simply results in more Capitals, challenging the singular status of the capital city. Among the many results is a complete disruption of relative position and scale; when places become parts there is no fixed frame and we cannot establish the relative proximity of elements. This is a strange outcome given that the speaking parts are Capitals, and Stein comments on her ability to so completely destabilize the grounds for the play and therefore to determine relative proximity: "The first capital was nearly eight hundred miles away. This gives me no idea of its distance of the distance from here to there" (422). In a play that rotates places as

speakers, there are no fixed points or stable boundaries, and Stein successfully evokes a rhythmic quality of coming and going that does not depend upon the fictions of character and setting. Movement is not description of action, but intensive potential as in this merry passage from First Capital: "Able to able to able to go able to go and come able to come and go able to come and go able to do so" (426).

The tagline "in the first place" that Stein will repeat with variation in "An Elucidation" is comical in *Capital Capitals* since "place" figures in both senses at once, as rhetorical expression and as location. When the First Capital says "in the first place," the idiomatic expression is simultaneously rhetorical and literal. Stein tests the senses associated with this rhetorical expression, however, when she adds the second, third, and fourth places, thereby prompting us to ask why a speaker in explaining or recounting something distinguishes only between "the first place" and at most "the second place." Are two possibilities the limits of possibility in logical inference? Is there an unspoken restriction on the number of premises one may broach? When this figure of speech ("in the first place" or "in the second place") is spoken by a place serving as a speaking part Stein makes the figure speak, and reveals that the rhetorical expression is always a particular perspective or part.

The idiom "in the first place" is in turn displaced by a passage exploring the idiomatic expression, "[i]n this way."

> First Capital. In this way in as they say this way, in this way they say they are as they may say this way. In this way things matter.
> First Capital. Cannot express can express tenderness.
> First Capital. In this way as they say in this way as they say they cannot express tenderness. As they say in the way they say they can express in this way tenderness, they can express tenderness in this way. (420)

By this point, Stein has so conflated speaking parts and places that this idiomatic expression is now fruitfully ambiguous: in the manner of whom or of what? When the idiom is so tested, questions concerning the manner of living or of being shift perpetually between what might be said of a place and what might be said of persons living in or visiting the place. All this, of course, without having fixed the place. The expectations associated with places abound, but the play does not depict visits or the life lived there, rather it creates a playful and constantly changing meditation

on the myriad expectations one might have concerning visiting or settling in places. There is no stable frame for a fictive account, or a completed assessment. Stein continually introduces change by specifying detail, or by simply alternating between treating the Capitals as speakers or as places, that is as speakers who offer commentary or in commentary about the Capitals as potential sites of experience. *In this way*, emotion is expressed as characteristic manner ("they can express tenderness in this way") without ascribing this manner to persons or places. It is a curious conflation of subjects and objects when speaking parts are also places and the result is that the practice and habit of comparing the relative desirability of places floats free of any particular story and becomes an expression or manner that the text can examine. The play is not a story of pleasures enjoyed in particular places, but an abstraction of the pleasurable activity of this sorting and comparing, and of storytelling as a pastime.

Capital Capitals ends with a short disquisition ("I wish to tell all I know about Capitals"), with a riff on "repeating" in a rhyming string (repeat/treat/retreat/complete) that suggests myriad potential lines to explore (426). In a circling loop, the final lines of the play are a domestic aside, "And why do you spare little silver mats," that closes the play with the sort of domestic questioning with which it began (426).

To register the outcome of these experiments with framing and placing in the scope of Stein's landscape writing, it helps to read both forward and back in the series. Reading forward to "An Elucidation," which follows the landscape plays in sequence, we can see the influence of this odd conflation of speaking parts and places in Stein's analysis of explanation where she repeats the idiomatic expression, "[a] place for everything and everything in its place." As I have noted, the play consists in exchanges among the Capitals which are alternately or simultaneously both places and personages. Readers may be more willing to grant Stein this license with the capital cities if the play can be treated as whimsical, but now we are prepared to see that she employs much the same strategy in analyzing the places and parts of explanation with startling consequences for a model of knowledge. In "An Elucidation," explanation cannot "take the place" of examples when it becomes a part, that is, when the word "explanation" is itself a member of a series crossing the text. In her experiments with the landscape play, Stein makes the discovery that when places become parts they cease to act as grounds for the conventional representation of theatrical illusionism or for the hierarchical and substitutive logic of conventional explanation.

Locating "An Elucidation" in the sequence of the landscape experiments, we realize that there is more than a little theatricality involved in the text. Stein analyzes the staging of an explanation as a matter of the relation of places and parts. In "An Elucidation," examples, the parts of explanation, assume a curious autonomy much like the places of *Capital Capitals* when these are speaking parts.

> This is an example a very good example or an example.
> This is an example or a very good example. (433)

As I claimed, when parts and places are rendered equivalent terms, neither placed nor displaced by hierarchical ordering, both may circulate freely and new connections become possible. But I want to say more: the curious way in which the places of *Capital Capitals* seem to speak both as places and as parts (personages) recurs in the unexpected action of examples in "An Elucidation." As we have seen, at various points of the text, examples remain stubbornly "in place," resistant to the displacement of explanation, and at other points, examples yield their "place" readily (when examples re-emerge as a subheading, or a subheading becomes an example). And, as in the play where the Capitals somehow combine properties of both places and persons, in "An Elucidation" Stein personifies the rhetoric of explanation, sounding its many and varied tones and potential stances (*accepting* or *refusing*). This suggests that one outcome of Stein's analysis is to abstract a property of representation that typically goes undetected, namely the means by which an element of a text is understood to *play a role* relative to another term, even while she blocks its ability to do so. Stein explores the various activities of explanation and its figuration, including practices of addition, division, and substitution; the expression of conviction; and the figuration of conveyance (carried across), of transfer, or of journey (arrival). The role of explanation ranges over these practices and rhetorical figures but, prevented from completing any of these, it emerges in the text as an abstract force. Place in "An Elucidation" has lost the part it contributes conventionally to fix relative positions, to establish order and trajectory. Stein borrows the quality of intensive movement she created in *Capital Capitals* where places are parts so as to prevent the figurative places of explanation from establishing a frame, and instead abstracts and expresses the infinitive forms of these practices: "to place." Much as in the play, without this framing, "moving is in every direction," and making sense transpires in "An Elucidation" in the ceaseless contacts among parts.

In summary, the operation of place is prevented from contributing to narrative and dramatic illusion in "Why Are There Whites To Console" and *Capital Capitals*, and the texts instead are composed of the incessant mobility of parts without the illusion of a frame. As a consequence, while much seems to transpire in both texts, nothing "takes place." Sequential experiments in landscape writing generated differing temporal properties: the suspension and immanence conveyed in *Lend A Hand*, as if duration did not require the passing of time, and the ceaseless flux of "Why Are There Whites" and *Capital Capitals.* In the plays, this strategy fulfills Stein's ambition to create "moving with which anyone can keep time," and, when carried over to "An Elucidation," it accounts for the ineffable and elusive quality of explanation that seems to transpire and yet never "takes place." Stein's radical formulation of knowledge combines, then, the impassive quality of immanence from *Lend A Hand* and the elusive quality of subsequent landscape plays and intervening texts. In "An Elucidation," Stein refuses to forfeit the implacable tone associated with conviction ("Knowledge is what you know" as she would later write) even while she demonstrates that, whatever "knowing" is, it is not an arrival, it does not "take place" (*LIA* 250).

When Background Is Foreground: "Subject-Cases: The Background of A Detective Story" (1923)

Having traced the sources that inform the strategies of Stein's epistemology, we might be tempted to call it a day and skip forward to the consequences of this model of "knowing" for portraiture. However, recognizing that an intervening text, "Subject-Cases: The Background Of A Detective Story," is a part of the series of landscape experiments prepares us for the new method of Stein's portraiture. In treating it as a critical link in the compositional experiment we are tracing, I am deliberately moving this obscure text from background to foreground of critical attention. This repeats the formal strategy of the text which entails reversing the "places" of foreground and background.

Evidently, Stein had her own experiment in mind when she wrote in late August 1923 to her friend Carl Van Vechten congratulating him on *The Bow Boy*, his latest novel: "It's all the background and the background, as yet American life is the background. Others have tried to make background foreground, but you have made foreground background, and our

foreground is our background. To follow one before the other. Now to follow one before the other, and that's it."[21] That summer Stein had completed "Subject-Cases: The Background Of A Detective Story," a long narrative piece in which she "tried" the very experiment she describes in her letter, shifting "background" into the place of "foreground." What she found to admire in Van Vechten's novel was an experiment with figure–ground, that is, the compositional problem that occupied her at the time. "You listen as you know," as Stein conceded elsewhere (*LIA* 289). Reading this text in the sequence of Stein's landscape experiments, we find how thoroughly she exhausted the terms of a compositional problem. "Subject-Cases" is the startling culmination of her ambition to achieve dynamic movement in composition: "if it were possible that a movement were lively enough it would exist so completely that it would not be necessary to see it moving against anything to know that it is moving" (*LIA* 290). That is, having succeeded in creating dynamic movement with differing methods in the landscape plays, Stein next examines the nature of that "*anything*." "Subject-Cases" is an investigation of the ground or background, the fixed point in conventional representation "against which" one registers movement. Moving "background" into the place of "foreground," Stein questions what constitutes "background" or, more exactly, what renders some elements ground to others.

As we will see, the originality of Stein's experiment—and what makes "Subject-Cases" such a disconcerting text—is her willingness to displace human agency so completely as "foreground." The characters and action of a story typically "move against" an inanimate or less remarkable "background," the story setting or summary scenes. But when she evacuates the human subject in "Subject-Cases," replacing foreground with background, Stein makes a remarkable discovery. Far from static, the "background" is replete with implied agency and movement suggested entirely by the expressive range of parts of speech when these are freed of the constraints of predication.

In her lecture, "Plays," Stein identified introductory or "background" material, including characters' names and their relationships, as part of the "problem with plays." As I have explained, for Stein these were temporal problems: a viewer must register which parts the actors play, and the relations among the characters, but "when the actors are there they are there and they are there right away" (*LIA* 254). Background material contributes to the viewer's sense that the action began without her, and to the disquieting lack of synchronicity of a viewer's emotion with the play.

According to Stein, the curtain is the first indication that the emotional tempo of play and viewer will not coincide: "The emotion of you on one side of the curtain and what is on the other side of the curtain are not going to be going on together. One will always be behind or in front of the other" (*LIA* 245).

Of course, Stein was not the first to recognize that figure–ground relations are merely conventions and to choose to experiment with this formal property. In conventional realist narrative, background is the summary or synthesis of information that, while necessary for the story, is not presented dramatically. Background can serve as "preparation" for the action of the narrative, "setting the scene" for the events described. For Genette, background is what distinguishes scenes *as scenes* and it is this literary tradition that Flaubert and Proust would contest: "summary remained, up to the end of the nineteenth century, the most usual transition between two scenes, the 'background' against which most scenes stand out, and thus the connective tissue par excellence of novelistic narrative, whose fundamental rhythm is defined by the alternation of summary and scene."[22] According to Genette, while Proust may have tested the capacities of the iterative most thoroughly, Flaubert was the first to grant iterative narrative new autonomy, allowing "background" to take on "a wholly unusual fullness and autonomy."[23]

In painting, we might recall that for their Italian counterparts, seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting seemed meaningless. Painting was story, Biblical or mythological allegory.[24] Early viewers did not know how to make sense of landscape painting, or what to look for in a painting that seemed to be composed entirely of background. A disparaging passage attributed to Michelangelo provides an early example of the use of the word landscape: "In Flanders they paint with a view to external exactness . . . They paint stuffs and masonry, the green grass of the fields, the shadow of trees, and rivers and bridges, which they call landscapes, with many figures on this side and many figures on that."[25] With entirely different means, Cubist painting would baffle the attempt to discern foreground and background as conventionally. While it may make little sense to speak of background any longer, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Picasso's dealer, claimed that Cubist painters began with background: "Representation of the position of objects in space is done as follows: instead of beginning from a supposed foreground and going on from there to give an illusion of depth by means of perspective, the painter begins from a definite and clearly defined background."[26]

In place of a detective story, we might interpret "Subject-Cases" in accord with the distinctive impression that it is composed solely of "background" material, that is, the setting or backdrop for subject activity. The text is the "background of a detective story," and as Stein would later observe in her 1932 detective novel, *Blood on the Dining Room Floor*, "you see the thing to remember is that when there is a background for a crime there is no crime."[27] We find elements consistent with travel preparations and a motor trip, details that link this text to "Why Are There Whites," but no characters. We read that "preparations may be undertaken" (AFAM 4), of "directions unasked" (7), of "A guide to guide and with a guide" (13), and of the uses of parlors: "Mention parlors. Parlors are none none are in parlors, parlors are known and unknown and peculiar" (11). But in place of a travel narrative or detective story, the "preparations" of this text devolve into matters of textual organization. In the text, "Chapter II" begins: "Exploration. / The party prepares to depart and starts to leave having first put everything in order as a preface" (24).

Nonetheless, because of its title, "Subject-Cases: The Background Of A Detective Story," has been mistaken for a detective story. Noting that when she wrote the piece, Stein was reviewing early manuscripts in hopes of publication, Richard Bridgman long ago suggested that the mystery of "Subject-Cases" is "autobiographical, even confessional" and concerns concealing references in the manuscripts. As evidence, he cites the lines "this is to be antedated. Confederate, to confederate," and "It can be seen to have been done in collaboration, collaboration and collusion."[28] Since Stein often disguised biographical references, this practice seems unlikely to have generated a detective story of cover-up and secret "collaboration." Perhaps Stein alludes to her review of manuscripts[29] in a word play on "revise" and "reverse" which becomes "Reversion makes revision stronger," but, as we will see, "Reversibly speaking" is the method of the piece, not its subject (8). The word "parlor," so promising for the setting of detective fiction is, according to one critic, "the basis for several especially fervid stretches of verbal orchestration."[30] Bridgman concludes that "Subject-Cases" is "a long, repetitive piece stuck fast on the shoals of sound association," while another critic dismisses it as "an impenetrable thirty-page piece enigmatically titled."[31]

"Subject-Cases" includes words evidently drawn from detective fiction including "antedate," "justice," "calculate," "culpable," and "violence." However, to read selectively for key terms of detective fiction as critics have done is to read past the method of the text in a misguided attempt to

foreground a subject against a background. Here, for example, is a paragraph in which the word "justice" appears.

> Just a station in justice to this station, just to state and adjust it, just to state it in justice to state it to state it in justice to it, to adjust it, and to do justice to it and to be adjusted for it, for it and by advising justice for it, to advise to do justice to it, due to it, justice due to it, to adjust more than to just advisedly obstruct it, justice do it do and do justice to it, do and do do justice to it, to advise to adjust it to this and to that, and to do justice to this[. . .](5–6)

Breaking off about midway through the paragraph, it should be evident that piecing together a detective story based on Stein's biography or the meaning of the word "justice" won't "do justice" to the method of this text. (The words "culpable" and "antedate" are similarly modified in other paragraphs.) More than word choice, the dogged auditioning of multiple variations in the above passage expresses Stein's "passion for exactitude," or the pretense of such exactness. Indeed, "justice" is a near-homonym for *justesse*, the French word for accuracy. Rather than developing a story concerning "justice," the text unfolds by finding the word "just" in the words "justice" and "adjust." Stein creates a pronounced background effect that effectively displaces "justice" as a singular subject of the sentence by modifying these variants still further, as *ad*just seems to call forth *ad*vise, "due" summons "do," and by exploring related idioms including "do justice to it."

There is no mystery and no crime in the text. *What is missing* is the subjective case, the grammatical operation ordinarily used to indicate that a term is the performer of action or a subject of discussion. Subjective case is distinguished from objective and possessive cases, and case forms generally match sentence functions: subjective case for the subjects of clauses, objective case for objects.[32] Where we might imagine that the lack of human agency would be a constraint, Stein generates "Plenty of this" by making statements in the infinitive form, then modifying objective case with different verbs and adverbial clauses. The following is another typical example in which the word *information*—perhaps the *informational background* of narrative—fills the "foreground" by means of the "plentiful" iteration and modification of similar clauses.

> Plenty of this in the place of this and in place of this plenty of this in place of this. The fairly well seen formation to fairly well see to fairly well to have to see fairly well, to see to it fairly well, fairly well seen information, to fairly well see and to inform to informally see very well to it and to plentifully see

> and to fairly well see and to see plentifully and in place and in this place and to place and to place more there, plentifully, and formally and for that and for that to be seen fairly well seen to be fairly well and informally more and plentifully more plentifully fairly furnished with the information additionally. To add this as information and to be authorised informally. (5)

As *information* steadily becomes the *formation* on view, Stein explores narrative conventions associated with the illusion of places as well as the illusion of *placing* subjects and objects. When the signature tag line of this period recurs in "Subject-Cases" ("in place and in this place and to place and to place more there"), Stein employs the phrasing to examine how "things take place" in story displacing others: "In place of this." Evidently, her analysis of the relative places of explanation and examples in "An Elucidation" suggested an avenue for exploring the relation of subjects and objects in narrative. In the opening passage of "Subject-Cases," Stein examines the tendency of narrative to displace "this" by taking its place:

> In case of this.
> A story.
> Subjects and places.
> In place of this.
> A story.
> Subjects and traces.
> In face of this.
> A story.
> Subjects and places.
> In place of this and in place of this.
> A story.
> Subject places.
> In place of this.
> A story. (3)

While *subjects and places* appear to call for "A story," Stein suggests that its singularity displaces the plurality of potential stories ("Subjects and --") as well as the haecceity of *this*. There is no forthcoming story in the text, and in "Subject-Cases" it makes no sense to ask direction.

> Last at last how many directions are there at last. By this mail at this sale what direction was it at the last. At least. By mail and in detail and for sale in how many directions unasked and in what direction. In what direction

> do they last. It is classed. It is to be passed as if it were to be unasked. A direction is unasked and by mail and at last and for sale and in the past and in detail fastened and unfastened. In reconsideration. Let it be Saturday. (7)

Passages such as this one make "Subject-Cases" a confounding and curiously involuted text. Deictic parts of speech including *it* and *this*, whose meaning typically depends on context, refuse to yield their places to subjects. Without specifying a singular referent, Stein can expand conjunctive relations indefinitely, adding more terms ("added to it") or suggesting further connections ("it was related to this"). Sustaining this ambiguity, the shifter is a capacious term: "It holds more and more" (10, 11, 12). Rather than ground the illusion of subject activity, deictic elements pertain only to local points of reference, to verbal phrases that may qualify others incompletely ("partly") or only temporarily.

> Partly and partly this, settled for them it was settled for them partly for this they parted it and in question it was in question. (20–1)

Likewise, activities suggested by the text are rarely completed. Anything "settled" is immediately reversed or the conditional tense suggests infinite potential: "To perceive a perception" begins one sentence (11). "To advise and to advise" begins another (14). Where there are no definite figures and action does not take place, *it* cannot become background, but persists instead as pure experience "in question" or open to interpretation. Would-be agents are quickly absorbed in anagrams: "men and mention" (23). Without subjective case to distinguish between performer and performed, verbs begin to act strangely, "attracting" other verbs: "To attract and to attract. To attract to the attraction without indication without any indication of the nature of the attraction" (14). Verbs and adverbs mimic some of the functions of subject case, and indeed, much of the text proceeds through the "expansion of a verb." In yet another method to create background, Stein omits verbs and instead strings nouns into a chain that persists by folding its terms: "collusion and carefulness and carefulness and harmony and harmony and distance and distance and determination and determination and selections and selections and elaboration and elaboration" (11).

Stein thereby introduces her own style of *stammering* and we might add her to the series Deleuze has charted of "great authors" who "make language stutter," a list that for him includes Beckett, Roussel, and Péguy,

each with his own distinctive style.[33] These are not writers whose invented characters stutter, but writers who make language itself "vibrate and stutter" by destabilizing language, pushing it to its limits, "making it bifurcate and vary in each of its terms, following an incessant modulation."[34] Rather than treat language as a homogeneous system in equilibrium, Deleuze observes, we might regard it as a system "in perpetual disequilibrium or bifurcation" in which terms are subjected to continuous variation.[35]

> As long as language is considered as a system in equilibrium, the disjunctions are necessarily exclusive (we do not say "passion," "ration," "nation" at the same time, but must choose between them), and the connections, progressive (we do not combine a word with its own elements, in a kind of stop-start or forward-backward jerk). But far from equilibrium, *the disjunctions become included or inclusive, and the connections, reflexive*, following a rolling gait that concerns the process of language and no longer the flow of speech. Every word is divided, but into itself (*pas-rats*, *passions-rations*); and every word is combined, but with itself (*pas-passe-passion*). It is as if the entire language started to roll from right to left, and to pitch backward and forward: *the two stutterings*.[36]

Just so in "Subject-Cases," where Stein makes language stammer by means of rhyming strands that include disjunctions and where *moving is in every direction*: "By mail and in detail and for sale in how many directions unasked and in what direction" (7). She violates the selective and combinatory rules of language use in a radical empiricism that insists on both disjunctive and conjunctive relations. In so doing, Stein releases "the affect of language," a unique potency that exceeds that of speech where speakers must select one among variable statements or positions and move in one direction or sequence.[37]

Stein's stuttering is often in the optative mood. She creates a mounting sense of possibility and of expansive generosity by stringing together verbs strangely devoid of subjects. It is not a stammering of a speaker who corrects herself, but an expression of the elasticity of language, its capacity *to join* more or otherwise.

> To join in pleasure. To an addition of pleasurable agitation, to such an admission admit that admitted it is admitted it is submitted, to submit agitation, agitate for admission, to agitate to admit, to submit, to the pleasurable to the pleasure of joining in that pleasure, to join in that pleasure. To agitate to be agitated, to agitate the joining in that pleasure to the adjoining pleasure, to submit to this as an admission, to admit this to submit to this, to submit

> this agitation so that it is admitted that there is an addition to the adjoining pleasure [. . .] (4)

Here, without specifying human agency, pleasure is engaged and to that pleasurable state are added qualifications ("pleasurable agitation"), the potential of infinitives ("to agitate to admit, to submit"), and yet further possibilities for modifying the infinitive clause "to join in pleasure" merely by adding others ("the adjoining pleasure"). Surprising affective states including agitation are thereby "admitted" to pleasure.

Reversing the places of foreground and background, Stein reveals that background is not a *place* after all. In "Subject-Cases," background proves to be an assemblage of shifting verb tenses, rhyming strings, stale idiomatic expressions and signal phrases for succession or textual organization. This is a nonhuman or pre-predicate composition in that subjects do not determine the possibilities suggested by grammatical variation. This does not mean, however, that nothing happens in the text. On the contrary, in an intensive and gathering surface, words demonstrate their attachment to other words: nouns are transformed into verbs, verbs into adverbs, adverbs into adverbial clauses, and so on. Perhaps this peculiar magnetism accounts for the many synonyms for attachment and detachment in the text including *join*, *attach*, and *unfasten*.

In place of the confessions or admissions of detective fiction, Stein explores the kind of agency that language "admits" in variations that convey affective qualities of approach, encroachment, submission, or possession. Without the restrictions of subject case, the combinatorial function of prepositions such as *to* and *in,* expand and multiply. Disjunctions are no longer exclusive: we do not choose among *agitate/admit/submit* as readers ordinarily would and as speakers must. Instead, what emerges in this "art of inclusive disjunctions" is the concept of pleasure complicated by agitation, joined or adjoined in variable ways, but not joined to or by human agency.[38] In these sentences where "there are no characters other than the words themselves," the affective range of language is expressed and reveals its highly mutable shape.[39]

But why throw language into this state of disequilibrium? Why imagine a language that no one speaks? If the affective state of language can be expressed free of predicative states of subjectivity, then perhaps it will be possible to think along new lines for thought, beyond familiar concepts. This is to imagine that something new in our thinking begins when we are caught off-balance, when we are not fully ourselves. "Can we make progress if we do not enter into *regions far from equilibrium*?" Deleuze

asks.[40] By including "Subject-Cases" in Stein's oeuvre, we acknowledge how radically her experiments challenge the notion of a coherent or unified organization of the self and the conventions of its representation. Not only does she dispense with story and characters, Stein foregoes the logical operations meant to reflect human engagement with the world "outside" the self. Things no longer remain in place and are instead connected in remarkable ways. The palpable intensity of Stein's sentences, their utter strangeness, suggests the vast and impersonal force that eludes classification as subjectivity or objectivity, and that precedes or exceeds the self organized within the scope of iterative and familiar experiences.

What sort of world has Stein envisioned? Borrowing the title of an essay by William James, we might say that in "Subject-Cases" Stein creates "A World of Pure Experience." Background proves to be the sheer potential of language itself to form "joining" or "adjoining" relations without submitting these to human interpretation or analysis. For the radical empiricist for whom relations are paramount, consciousness is not an entity, but a matter of "relations between terms," namely, the experience of continuous states of mind. In this text, Stein discovers that the supposed "background" for the experience of subjectivity is also pure experience. The basis of our experience is the perception and classification of different types of conjunctive relations—"with, near, next, like, from, towards, against, because, for, through, my"—relations which, according to James, impart different affective connotations of "intimacy and inclusiveness."[41] According to James, we rarely apprehend these fluid, transitive relations, so fixed are we on following the actions of subjects, nouns, the substantives. And yet, in a marvelous passage, James posits what we might imagine if only we could isolate and observe differing properties of the various types of conjunctive relations.

> *A priori*, we can imagine a universe of withness but no nextness; or one of nextness but no likeness, or of likeness with no activity, or of activity with no purpose, or of purpose with no ego. These would be universes, each with its own grade of unity. The universe of human experience is, by one or another of its parts, of each and all these grades. Whether or not it possibly enjoys some still more absolute grade of union does not appear upon the surface.[42]

Of course, I am suggesting that Stein tries this very experiment in language. When she treats narrative as landscape, that is, as a "formation" or background, she posits a composition in Jamesian terms of "nextness

but no likeness." She studies the kinds of narrative *relations* that are possible when elements are placed "next" to one another in formation and the "likeness" of realism is no longer at issue. In its ceaseless, undirected movement, the earlier text, "Why Are There Whites To Console," is a composition "of activity with no purpose," whereas in the impersonal "Subject-Cases," she has created a universe "of purpose with no ego." Part of the strangeness of these texts stems from the fact that we are not accustomed to finding these relations in unmixed states; as James suggests, human experience is composed "of each and all these grades." But Stein is not interested in telling stories based on familiar experiential relations. There is no illusion of subjects moving across space, or of actions "prepared" and completed. Parsing continuous variation of its terms in dense block paragraphs, Stein makes the tension in language an intensive force with palpable qualities—it rises and subsides, contracts and relaxes, coils and unravels. This eerie, impersonal landscape brings us into awareness of the forces available in pre-predicate and non-instrumental language, that is, in language that has not been "prepared" for subjects, as we already understand them.

Stein's achievement in setting parts and places into dynamic flux in these experiments made it possible to reconfigure the conventional relation of a portrait subject to "background" and to create instead a portrait that emerges from the forces that constitute an open, discursive field. The portraits Stein wrote during her landscape years, the subject of my next chapter, are difficult and demanding because they so radically resist the rationalist premises of representation.

Notes

1. For an alternative interpretation of Stein's landscape plays, see Bowers's "*They Watch Me as They Watch This*": *Gertrude Stein's Metadrama*. Bowers begins with the premise that Stein's plays are "metadiscursive," and discusses differences between the "written text" and the "performance text," 4–7 and passim. Although she acknowledges that in an early play such as *A List* Stein gives language "a spatial character" (3), Bowers discounts Stein's landscape homology and divides the plays into two types: those primarily concerned with spatiality written between 1920 and 1923, and those primarily concerned with the temporality of theater written between 1927 and 1933. By splitting spatial and temporal experi-

ments, Bowers misses Stein's experiment to conflate the two, that is, to create a spatial dimension in which she can express varied temporal effects. Ultimately, for Bowers, Stein's plays must be a theater for or of language, since as much as Stein may try to arrest time and deliver process, when a play is acted, the language is said and becomes product. Bowers concludes that Stein creates the "presentness" of the play "by recording poiesis, the play of the poet with language," 134. While for Bowers Stein's plays are "about language and its relation to the performance event," I would say instead that the plays are compositions in which language is revealed to *already be* a performative event, 25. Somehow, for Bowers, the writer must be imagined present: "In Stein's theater we can experience this play of language because the language that plays before us is a record and reenactment of the language play of the poet," 134. On the contrary, I would argue that what is exciting (or terrifying) about Stein's plays are the moments that reveal that language *plays with or without its author*—displaying its inhumanity according to Paul de Man. He writes of the "linguistic structures, the play of linguistic tensions, linguistic events that occur, possibilities which are inherent in language—independently of any intent or any drive or any desire we might have" in *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967), 96. See Craig Dworkin on de Man in his analysis of the ways in which "the materiality of language always escapes *semantics*," *Reading the Illegible* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 77.

2. "Why Are There Whites To Console" follows *Lend A Hand* in Volume 17 of the typescripts prepared and bound by Toklas and Stein and archived in the Yale Collection of American Literature (YCAL). There is no evidence in the YCAL Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas papers to contest this sequence. Although inconclusive, particular word choices in "Why Are There Whites" may suggest that Stein was prompted in late October or early November 1922 to recall the road trip to Provence by letters from Janet Scudder and Camille Lane who continued traveling and house hunting in the region. "Why Are There Whites" closes with explicit and humorous reference to Scudder: "Miss Janet Scudder is an example of the intention to realise that there is no road to ruin" (WTC 218). In manuscript, the third of four *cahier* for "Why Are

There Whites" marked "Part II" is a small *carnet*. On the front cover Stein has written and scratched out "Why are there no whites to [illegible]" and for the *cahier* entry indicated by "Commencé le" she has filled in "Prudence," and for "Terminé le" she inserted "Patience and/foresight." Below this appears: "A story of Avignon/Suggested by/D.D." Certainly "Prudence" is what Stein cautioned her house hunting friends. In a letter dated October 14, 1922 from Aix-en-Provence, Scudder writes "We did not find a home in Juan-les-Pins or Saint Raphael or any of these places" and objects to the Riviera, adding "I don't think it would be nice to live there." In "Why Are There Whites" Stein writes: "First. She needed the sea./ Second. She needed to be away from the sea" (217). Apparently responding to Stein's admonitions in an undated letter from Grasse (possibly October 1922) Scudder writes, "I suppose we do seem to scamper about a good deal, it's the bee in our bonnets to find a HOME somewhere." In "Why Are There Whites" we read: "Janet said that she had been stung again and again by a bee and that she never neglected attending to the sting" (201). In her letter Scudder advises Stein to use a mechanic in Aix and stop at the Hotel Thermes Sextius. Perhaps the word "Thermes" prompted Stein's question "Have you seen where they make thermometers" (WTC 217).

3. The date of composition of "Subject-Cases" is from Dydo, *The Language That Rises*, 71.
4. If there is a meaningful comparison of Stein's innovation to that of cinema, it is her idea that movement need not be conceived as "moving against" a stable point. See Deleuze on "pre-cinematographic conditions" in which movement can only be conceived in relation to a still point, in *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986; original 1983), 58–61.
5. James R. Mellow, *Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein & Company* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 255. Although Stein tried to dissuade her, Scudder did purchase property in Aix-en-Provence, and while her purchase was not to prove satisfactory, Dydo speculates that this house-hunting excursion with Scudder may have influenced Stein and Toklas's desire for a country house before the couple's stay in Belley in 1924 and before they actively

began looking for a house themselves in 1926, *The Language That Rises*, 70.

6. *Sherwood Anderson/Gertrude Stein: Correspondence and Personal Essays*, ed. Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 21–22.
7. *Three Lives* was originally published in 1909 and has been reprinted in *Gertrude Stein Writings, 1903–1932* among others. Marjorie Perloff analyzes the various senses of the word "wandering" in "Melanctha," *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 94–5.
8. Mellow, *Charmed Circle*, 255.
9. A variation on the question appears in Stein's portrait, "Jo Davidson" written earlier the same year: "And how many whites are there," *Portraits And Prayers* (New York: Random House, 1934), 194. Subsequently cited in the text as *P&P*.
10. This mechanistic depiction of realist narrative structure has reminded at least one critic of a car: "As if these were the 'parts' of a narrative, in the same sense that engine, chassis and wheels are parts of a whole," Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 116.
11. Ellen Berry, *Curved Thought and Textual Wandering: Gertrude Stein's Postmodernism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 42. In her study of Stein's narrative styles, Berry focuses on Stein's alternatives to the closed forms of realist narrative, including what she calls the "enunciative positions" of *A Long Gay Book* and a "map of gathering intensities." While she observes that critical narratives, including feminist criticism, have obscured Stein's difference from other women writers and from postmodern writers, Berry's own approach includes uncritical notions about the forms of subjectivity ("identity in relation") that women writers purportedly seek to express.
12. Isabelle Monod-Fontaine uses this expression to describe Picasso's retreat to the countryside north of Paris in July 1908 where he painted landscapes, the *Farmer's Wife* and *Dryad (Wood Nymph)* among other paintings in *Matisse Picasso*, exhibition catalog, eds. Elizabeth Cowling, Anne Baldassari, John Elderfield, John Golding, et al., The Museum of Modern Art (London: Tate Publishing, 2002), 89. See also Neil Cox's speculations about the introduction of the newspaper title *L'Indépendent* in 1911–12 paintings of Picasso and Braque after discovering at the Salon des Indépendants

"that they had become founders of a new 'movement'" in *Cubism* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), 239.

13. Stein asserts that "words left alone more and more feel that they are moving," *N*, 10.
14. Rosmarie Waldrop, "Form and Discontent," in *Diacritics* 26, no. 3/4 (Fall-Winter 1996): 61.
15. Following on a question Stein poses in *A Novel Of Thank You*, "What is the difference between a novel and a story, no one said it," Steven Meyer points out that while a story is a speech act, a novel isn't: "No one says, speaks, a novel, whereas when one tells a story, one literally says it" in his introductory essay, "The New Novel: *A Novel Of Thank You* and the Characterization of Thought," *A Novel Of Thank You*, xii.
16. Dydo, *The Language That Rises*, 173 and 283.
17. Bowers, "*They Watch Me as They Watch This*," 46.
18. Bowers treats Thomson's scores for the portraits, "Susie Asado" and "Preciosilla" (both 1913), as preparation for his work on *Four Saints* and summarizes their performance history, 44–48.
19. Dydo comments, "Stein's fascination with the number four is apparent in many pieces of this time," headnote to *Capital Capitals*, *SR* 415.
20. Ibid.
21. Letter from Stein to Van Vechten dated late August 1923 and written from Paris in *The Letters of GS and CVV, Vol. 1,* 86–7.
22. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* 97.
23. Genette, 117.
24. According to art historian Svetlana Alpers, Renaissance viewers were accustomed to art in which "imitative skills were bound to narrative ends," *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), xxi.
25. Ascribed to Michelangelo by Francisco de Hollanda and quoted in Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, *xxiii*.
26. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, ["The Rise of Cubism," originally published in *Der Weg zum Kubismus*, Munich: Delphin, 1920] trans. Henry Aronson and reprinted in Herschel B. Chipp, ed., *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, 255.
27. Gertrude Stein, *Blood On The Dining Room Floor* (Berkeley, California: Creative Arts Books, 1982; original 1948), 36.

28. Bridgman, *Gertrude Stein in Pieces*, 172. Bridgman's claim that the text concerns concealing references is perplexing given that, as he himself notes, "Subject-Cases" introduces references including by title to *A Long Gay Book*, one of the early texts he surmises that Stein was then re-reading, 172 and 213. Accepting Bridgman's claim, Jeanne Holland proposes that "the immediate circumstances surrounding the writing of 'Subject-Cases' attest to its encoding/hiding of Stein's and Toklas' lesbian relationship" in "Uncovering Woman's Body in Gertrude Stein's Subject-Cases: The Background Of A Detective Story," *College English* 52, no. 5 (Sept. 1990): 542.
29. Dydo speculates that on her return from St.-Rémy to Paris, Stein "probably wrote the very abstract 'Subject-Cases: The Background Of A Detective Story' perhaps about the reviews of *Geography And Plays*" which had begun to appear in the spring and summer of 1923 in *The Language That Rises*, 71 and 45.
30. While Gabrielle Dean notes that "Subject-Cases" pre-dates Stein's interest in the detective story genre by at least a decade, she also interprets the text within the rubric of the detective story in "Grid Games: Gertrude Stein's Diagrams and Detectives," *Modernism/modernity* 15, no. 2 (April 2008): 327.
31. Bridgman 172. Brooks Landon, "Not Solve It But Be In It: Gertrude Stein's Detective Stories and the Mystery of Creativity," *American Literature* 53, no. 3 (Nov. 1981): 487.
32. Frederick Crews, *The Random House Handbook* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992), 456–8.
33. Gilles Deleuze, "He Stuttered," in *Essays critical and clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997; original 1993), 108.
34. Ibid., 109.
35. Ibid., 108.
36. Ibid., 110.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 108.
40. Ibid., 109.
41. William James, "A World of Pure Experience," in *Writings 1902–1910*, 1161.
42. Ibid.,1161–2.

CHAPTER 5

Portraiture After Landscape

Having returned to Paris in March of 1923, Stein and Toklas set off again in late August for a trip to the Riviera to visit Picasso and his family. Following a gastronomic guide, they stopped on the way in Belley, a village in the department of Ain in the Rhône-Alps region of eastern France.[1] Abutting Geneva, the mountain range, valleys, and lakes of this region are truly dramatic. Stein and Toklas stayed in Belley for a few days at the Hôtel Pernollet, and this short visit began what would become their habit of leaving Paris for the country. Every summer thereafter the couple returned to Belley and to the same hotel until 1929 when they leased a country house in nearby Bilignin.[2] Stein and Toklas reached the Riviera where they met up with Picasso and his family in September 1923. In Nice, where the couple extended their stay until late November, they visited Juan Gris who was in Monte Carlo supervising the painting of stage sets and the execution of costumes he had designed for Serge Diaghilev's productions at the Théâtre de Monte Carlo.[3]

Letters from these years reveal that following the purchase of their new car in 1920, Stein and Toklas traveled extensively and made extended stays in several different, and often spectacular, regions of France. Clearly, the landscape of Provence, Ain, and the seashore of the Côte d'Azur made powerful impressions on Stein, and this proved a highly productive time in her writing. Stein's stay in the south brought her back into contact with old friends, Gris and Picasso, and prompted her reflection on the influence

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L. Voris, *The Composition of Sense in Gertrude Stein's Landscape Writing*,
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of painting on her work. Her prolonged stay in Nice was a period of relative calm and quiet, and Stein was able to carry on the work of the previous year in St.-Rémy. There she wrote "second portraits" of Alice Toklas, Carl Van Vechten, and Picasso in a distinctive new style informed by her experiments in landscape writing. As Dydo observes, with this burst of "second portraits," Stein commemorated the friendships that mattered most to her life and work.[4] These portraits are inflected by exuberance, an expression of Stein's delight in discovering a new method of portraiture.

Portraiture would test everything Stein had discovered in her experiments with landscape, since it is arguably the genre from which we most expect representation based on resemblance. Landscape was a way to resume "looking" without reinstating conventions of resemblance, and of making things present without forms of introduction. The landscape experiments resulted in a new method of portraiture that we cannot read on a representational theory of knowledge.

The burst of portrait writing in 1923 and 1924 including the second portraits Stein wrote in Nice constitutes a return to portraiture after a brief hiatus: Stein wrote no portraits between the years 1918 and 1920 inclusive.[5] The break in Stein's portrait writing coincides, as Wendy Steiner long ago observed, with her experiments in the landscape plays.[6] A formation of elements, the landscape plays evidently offered new methods to present groups of subjects. "In a sense," Steiner writes, "the play became the genre in which relationality could be preserved without allowing memory to enter."[7] She began slowly in 1921 and 1922 with a handful of portraits, some of which seem linked to concurrent experiments with narrative.[8] One has a sense of Stein feeling her way back to portraiture, writing occasional portraits but not yet formulating a new problem for herself. The new style of portraits dominated by "melody" begins in earnest after the plays Stein wrote in St.-Rémy.

Stein was well aware that with these portraits she had changed her method. Later she would theorize that the portraits were influenced by the quality of intensive movement that she had developed in the renewed looking of the "Saint Remy period." The portraits she wrote following her landscape plays are characterized by verbal patterning that produces strong rhythms, and Stein worried later that she was a bit carried away by sound during these years. In her lecture, "Portraits And Repetition," she explained, "Then I began to do plays to make the looking have in it an element of moving and during this time I also did portraits that did the

same thing. In doing these things I found that I created a melody of words that filled me with a melody that gradually made me do portraits easily by feeling the melody of any one" (*LIA* 308).

As I will demonstrate in these closing chapters, Stein's return to portraiture and her introduction of a distinctive new method is not a happenstance explained by the biography. While reunion with old friends may have prompted the wish to write second portraits, it does not explain their style. In my view, Stein resumed writing portraiture when she had developed a new concept of "knowing," including what it means to know others, based on her landscape experiments. Once we recognize that the portraits are written in keeping with a radical epistemology, we have a method for reading without reinstating the conventions of representation. Her epistemology combines the two sets of related paradoxes she found she could sustain in the experiments with landscape composition: first, that landscape exists, and at the same time is constructed by a viewer; and second, that it precedes and endures beyond the viewing (duration) at the same time that it is apprehended all-at-once (instantaneity). Stein's epiphany was that the concept of knowledge is structured by a similar set of paradoxes; if it requires incremental stages, nonetheless, knowing seems to occur with the instantaneity and conviction of "all-at-once" apprehension. On the model of landscape, "knowing" in "An Elucidation" occurs but does not "take place"; it has presentational force, and yet it is elusive, an expression of intensive compositional relations.

This model of knowing served Stein well when she turned to portraiture. Perhaps it was this insight concerning the contradictory temporal states sustained in knowledge that prompted the rush of second portraits because it helped her to formulate the compositional problems of writing second portraits of old friends. Reading in series, it is evident that writing second portraits constitutes yet another experiment with the "problem of time in relation to emotion," the problem that Stein identified in writing landscape plays. When she wrote second portraits of Van Vechten, Picasso, and Alice Toklas, Stein borrowed methods of imparting both duration and instantaneity she had developed in experiments with the landscape homology so as to render attachments that had endured over years with the immediacy of present experience.

We can see for ourselves that there is a dramatic shift in Stein's portrait style beginning with a second portrait of Carl Van Vechten she wrote

in August 1923 just before leaving Paris. The portrait, "And Too. Van Vechten. A Sequel To One.," somehow escaped catalog record and has received little critical attention.[9] It is here that Stein initiates a new style in portrait writing, one that will characterize the series of second portraits she wrote in quick succession during her stay in Nice. Writing to thank Van Vechten for a photographic self-portrait he had sent her as a gift in March 1923, what Stein said she liked best was the background: "I liked it but I liked the still lives particularly the curtains almost better than I liked you, the curtains are very feeling full."[10] The anecdote is a humorous reminder that we cannot assume we know what Stein saw when she looked. Her focus on the curtains rather than the portrait subject is not a bad metaphor for the method of the second portraits in which the density of monosyllabic words seems to block our efforts to discern a subject much like a screen or curtain.

The following is a typical passage from the Van Vechten portrait:

> As in as in has in has he in, has in as in. As he has in it, has he in it, has he in as he in as he has in in it. Has he as he has he has he has it in it.[11]

Stein's focus on the curtain in place of the portrait subject reminds us that portraiture extends the painterly analogy of figure–ground that she explored in the landscape plays. Rather than representing a subject as known on the basis of characteristic attributes, and discernible (foreground) from the method of the text (ground), in these portraits Stein flattens the figure–ground distinction and submerges the subject in the flux of transitive relations. As I demonstrated in the last chapter, this is consistent with her discovery that she might block the convention that certain elements of a text play a role in relation to others, positioned by predicate logic as parts, and placed in certain relation to others. Despite their inviting rhythms, the second portraits can seem closed. Clearly, we must devise reading strategies that will allow us to trace the "intricate evasions of as," and come to terms with the presentational and relational effects of shifters and modifiers.[12]

We can resist reinstating representation in reading the portraits if we take Stein's radical empiricism seriously. Stein's landscape homology is a visual model for an empiricist analysis of the relation of parts and wholes. In place of subjects, she begins with the equivalence of parts, obstructing their displacement in representation. Not only is the given not predicated

for subjects, Stein makes no assumptions about the relations that may form among these parts once they are not assigned "places" by subjects. Either the "background" has moved forward or it no longer makes sense to speak of "background" since all elements are in motion—but either way, this method disregards one of the most fundamental premises of portraiture, namely that the subject is discernible from the ground.

Our challenge as readers is to be open to immersion in the composition at the register of its "parts" without making these parts *of something* other than the compositional experiment at hand. When landscape is a model for "knowing," we shift our attention to a distributive, expansive, contingent activity of the composition including its capacity to evoke spatial qualities or qualities of movement. In place of conventional representation, this quality of intensive movement constitutes knowing, when knowing is understood as a dynamic event of the composition. The text expresses "knowing" in its unfolding through the variation in transitive relations (conjunctive and disjunctive relations) and through the effects of its overall compositional structure. The resulting compositional intensity is not an analog for the subject's characteristic attributes, and to so claim is merely to reinstate a more abstract expectation of representation. Instead, Stein's portraiture confronts us with a fundamental challenge to our expectations of the genre and critical challenges for reading. We must be willing to understand "knowing," including what it means to know another, not as a picturing, summary, or record, but as a dynamic activity of the text.

Consistent with a radical empiricism, Stein's concept of knowing critically includes the possibility for encounter with pre-predicative states in composition that is not governed in its grammars by conventional expectations of a subject and her customary relations to things. Ultimately, Stein's analysis of the relation of parts and places through the extended painterly homology disrupts the operation of denotation and signification. When she ignores subject-case, her experiments introduce an uncanny, novel landscape unpeopled by the persons and places of a predicate logic. We want to read in a way that corresponds to the experiment at hand, allowing for the possibility of an encounter with the unknown, the inchoate, with something genuinely new, not only in the genre of portraiture, but in our expectations as to how a subject might be situated in the flux of possibility that language expresses independent of the implications for speakers and subjects. In place of the likeness or resemblance of a subject, we read for the experiment of the text, its expression.

Since it is portraiture, the experiment is making sense of portraiture, critically staging its conventions as problems of composition. In place of reinstating representation, we can read dynamically by identifying the compositional problem of each portrait and tracking how it motivates the strategies of the text.

Stein's new style of portraiture is evident in her second portrait of Van Vechten when compared to her portrait of Hemingway, "He And They, Hemingway." She wrote both portraits sometime in August 1923 and in the same notebook. But while it is possible to detect biographical referents in the Hemingway portrait, however obscured these are through devices of displacement, condensation, and circumlocution,[13] the second portrait of Van Vechten does not proceed on the basis of such referential gestures to its subject, and reading for references will not address its method. We gain more ground by focusing on the compositional problem at hand, namely that of writing a second, retrospective portrait. The portrait forms as an engagement with this problem, including the risks of admitting comparison or retrospection. This exploration of the implications of writing a second portrait involves speculation as to whether there was a philosophical stance implied in having written only one portrait earlier. That is, Stein begins to turn the potential liability of writing second portraits to advantage in a portrait that contests the expectation that it identify characteristic attributes of the subject and that it be singular.

In this chapter, I begin with a brief comparison of the Hemingway and Van Vechten portraits in order to demonstrate that a new style emerges in the second portrait of Van Vechten, that its method continues the painterly analogy of the landscape period, and that we might frame a critical approach by identifying the compositional task entailed in writing a second portrait. In a close reading of "If I Told Him A Completed Portrait Of Picasso," Stein's second portrait of Picasso, I demonstrate how we might employ her epistemology to challenge our expectations of representation in portraiture. The method of the portrait strains our critical practice insofar as it thwarts conventional expectations of a portrait subject and of representation, indeed, as I will show, the portrait unfolds in part by revealing that notions of the subject depend upon representational conventions. In its radical empiricism, the experiment of the portrait gives us a glimpse of the plurality and complexity of relational possibilities available to a subject in language, the only field where the full range of these possibilities exists. The portraits of the landscape period challenge us to set aside the predicate logic that typically determines a subject and to engage

the critical problem of novelty in reading Stein, that is, to develop reading strategies that allow for what is unconditioned in the text by the conditions of representation. This is the disarming result of Stein's return to portraiture following successive landscape experiments, and the reward of reading in compositional sequence: knowing is dynamic, a presentational force of composition, and the subject of the portrait has dissolved into a pre-representational field of possibility opened by the contingency and mutability of relational language.

The New Style Emerges: "He And They, Hemingway" (1923), "And Too. Van Vechten. A Sequel To One." (1923)

In an early book on Stein's portraiture, Wendy Steiner follows the loose schema of the phases of compositional experiment in portraiture that Stein herself outlined in her lecture, "Portraits And Repetition." Although by her account there is considerable overlapping in phases, Steiner proposes three distinct periods in Stein's portraiture: the earliest portraits which she calls "typologizing" written from 1908 to 1911 (with more in this style as late as 1913); a "visually oriented period" as early as 1911, but "beginning in earnest in 1913" and continuing until 1925; and a final phase of portraits of "self-contained movement" from 1926 to about 1933 that mixes in "works of other styles."[14] Although Steiner distinguishes portraits written between 1921 and 1925, she groups these with the second phase of "visually oriented" portraiture begun in 1911 with the portraits of Mabel Dodge and Constance Fletcher.[15] Yet it is evident that portraits of the later second phase (1921–25) are in fact very different in style from portraits of the teens. Whereas Stein's initial efforts to readmit looking in the portraits of *Tender Buttons* and in portraits such as "Susie Asado" resulted in a cacophony of nouns, portraits of the 1920s dissolve the noun in a complex relational grid. In my view, it proves more useful critically to read across genre, reading the portraits in a series of related compositional experiments, rather than grouping by genre. When Stein resumed writing portraits after the break between 1918 and 1920, she gradually developed a method informed by her experiments with landscape writing. Reading in series, we can trace how experiments with the landscape homology influenced the questions she explored when she returned to portraiture and her strategies for writing second portraits.

Stein wrote the portrait "He And They, Hemingway" sometime before Hemingway left Paris for Canada in August of 1923. In a letter to Sherwood Anderson, she described the portrait as "a little skit I presented to him on going away."[16] In method, the portrait is a deft reprisal of Stein's strategies to this point: it reads like a lively spoken exchange, rich in punning and playful associations to the biography, and foregrounding nouns in a way that the portraits of the landscape period will not. The portrait has been much discussed critically, so in what follows, I will focus on how Stein treats reference in order to stage a comparison to the later portraits.

Hemingway's birthday fell in July, so he may well have been twenty-three years old when Stein wrote the portrait in 1923. But the portrait reads "Not ninety-three" (*SR* 450). As Steiner first documented, Stein borrowed language for the portrait from the illustrated *cahier* cover in which she originally wrote the manuscript. Under an emblem that reads *Les Educateurs de la Jeunesse*, the *cahier* cover depicts a small, circular portrait of Victor Hugo surrounded in four quadrants by figures drawn from his work, *Quatre-vingt treize*, *Lucrèce Borgia*, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, and *Les Chatiments*.[17] The opening lines of the portrait are clearly a gloss on the *cahier* cover: the French, *Quatre-vingt treize*, adds to "ninety-three" (four times twenty plus thirteen), but visually it includes wording similar in spelling to *vingt trois*—twenty-three, Hemingway's age ("Not ninety-three," 450). The word *vingt* of the cover applies equally well to the portrait of Carl Van Vechen Stein would write in the same notebook. Stein addressed her friend as "My dear Van" in her letters until March 1924 when she began addressing him as "Dear Carl."[18]

In the portrait illustration of the *cahier* cover, Hugo rests his hand on his forehead in a reflective pose. Hemingway is about to leave Paris having just published his first book, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*. Hence, "You go [Hugo] a victor." Stein, who claimed she would not return to America until she "returned a lion," is lionizing him, that is, "lionizing Hem." The lion of course fits well with the content of Hemingway's writing, his stories and poems concerning Roosevelt and the African velt ("extreme savagedom"). As other critics have noted, the opening lines send Hemingway on his way with puns on his name ("Not in the way./On their way and to head away"), and on the title he plans for his next collection, *In Our Time*, "Not by this time" (450).

In addition, there are the many "ways" of writing ("Not in the way" of Hugo) and perhaps reassurance that he has not been a nuisance, "Not in

the way" (450). Stein also puns on the first part of his name, "Heming," by rhyming the word "extreme" and thereby suggesting that along with heading out there is "hemming in." These directional forces impart a push–pull quality to the portrait and perhaps allude to Hemingway's circumstances at the time. In August of 1923, Hemingway was torn between his obligations to his family—his wife, Hadley, was about to give birth to the couple's first child—and his desire to write. He was leaving Paris for Toronto, a promising young writer who had just published his first book, reluctantly returning to join the regular staff of the *Toronto Star* newspaper in order to have a steady job for the baby's first year. Mistrustful of European medical procedures, Hadley wanted to have the baby closer to home.[19] Stein would later claim that she advised Hemingway to work for a year at the newspaper in order to earn enough money to devote himself to writing.

Although critics have tended to read this portrait from the vantage point of the dissolution of the friendship, when Stein wrote his portrait she was still friendly with Hemingway. She and Toklas would soon become godmothers for his child, and her letters to him were warm and affectionate. Stein helped Hemingway place his first book with Contact Editions; when he returned to Paris, Hemingway returned the favor by persuading Ford Madox Ford to serialize part of Stein's *The Making Of Americans* in the *Transatlantic Review*.[20] Rather than the ambivalence or animosity toward Hemingway some find in the portrait, the text speaks to Stein's genuine interest in the success of the young man she had advised. The next portrait she would write, the first of the second portraits of Carl Van Vechten, was prompted in part by the success of Van Vechten's forthcoming novel. Van Vechten had written in July that his novel, *The Blind Bow-Boy*, scheduled for publication in August, had already sold out its first printing. Taken together, the portraits she wrote before leaving for Nice reveal that Stein had success on her mind. In a letter congratulating Van Vechten, she wrote, "Bully for the boy, I am awfully pleased in your success. It's just the age it should come," but Stein herself had already passed that age.[21]

Bearing an introduction from Mabel Dodge, Van Vechten met Stein in Paris in 1913. So began one of Stein's most untroubled friendships, one that would last until her death in 1946. Initially a dance critic for the New York Times, after 1913 Van Vechten (1880–1964) was a theater critic, essayist, and novelist. He gave up writing and dedicated himself to photography after 1932, documenting the lives of many of his celebrated

friends.[22] Although they met infrequently, Van Vechten and the Stein–Toklas couple corresponded regularly over the years, with Van Vechten filling Stein in on the New York literary and art scene and promoting her work when he could in the U.S.

Upon reading Van Vechten's novel and before leaving Paris for Nice, Stein wrote the portrait, "And Too. Van Vechten. A Sequel To One." As aforementioned, this portrait was not cataloged with Stein's work and was discovered in 1984 by Edward Burns in the same notebook as the Hemingway portrait. In a wrinkle that Stein would have savored, this finding has complicated reference to the portraits of Van Vechten. Burns refers to "two second portraits," and distinguishes this earlier, unpublished second portrait from the second portrait later published in Stein's lifetime, "Van Or Twenty Years After. A Second Portrait Of Carl Van Vechten."[23] As Burns observes, the title of the unpublished second portrait, "And Too. Van Vechten. A Sequel To One." evidently puns on that of the first portrait of Van Vechten Stein wrote in 1913 entitled "One. Carl Van Vechten."[24]

What Stein found to admire Van Vechten's novel is a formal property—the relation of figure to ground—not incidentally the very problem that preoccupied her at the time. This is the letter I have already mined for its formulation of foreground and background in my discussion of "Subject-Cases." "My dear Van," Stein began in her letter from Paris in late August,

> I spent the afternoon of the fête of the Assumption of the Virgin reading the Bow boy and it went very very well. You have invented your own brightness and Fanny is one of the best things that have been done in a long time. Laura and Amy. It's all the background and the background, as yet American life is the background. Others have tried to make background foreground, but you have made foreground background, and our foreground is our background. To follow one before the other. Now to follow one before the other, and that's it. Fania likes it and Campaspe is as moral as a sister and Fanny. Fanny is the name. Actually can sunder as to the same, actually can sunder and as to the same and actually can sunder and as to the same, the sundered sisters and as to the same. And as to the sundered sisters and as to the same. Fanny as a name. I like melodrama and background, melodrama is background and so is the rest. Anyway it is clear. What you have done is very clear and I like it.[25]

"Others have tried to make background foreground" is of course what Stein herself had just tried in "Subject-Cases: The Background Of

A Detective Story." Rather than bringing "forward" the informational details generally eclipsed by subjects and dramatic action as she had done in "Subject-Cases," Stein credits Van Vechten with reversing the experiment, treating what would typically be foreground as though it were background. This results in her surprising conclusion that "melodrama is background." Perhaps Stein means the way the action of the plot is largely displaced in Van Vechten's novel by accounts of fashion and aesthetics. The letter and the portrait method reveal that Stein's formulation of a compositional problem in the landscape experiments initiates a new approach to portraiture.

Here is the opening of the portrait as it appears in Burns's publication including margin placement and, in brackets, the words or phrases Stein crossed out in the manuscript.

And too.
Van Vechten [now.]
a sequel to One—

[Or does he the does.]
Or does he
As he was.
Or as he was.
Or as he does.
Does he.
He does.
I tell you what it is general.
And in general.
Now to follow one
One before.
Before the other.
Now to follow one before the other.
In general
Now to follow one before the other.
And in general.
And in general now to follow one
before the other.[26]

Clearly the portrait carries over phrasing from Stein's letter describing the formal experiment she saw in Van Vechten's novel. In contrast to the portrait of Hemingway or to the first portrait of Van Vechten, this

portrait frustrates our attempts to interpret by distinguishing biographical references. Reading on, we can pick out a few references if we like, including a detail that may refer to Stein's incidental meeting of Van Vechten at the ballet (and therefore enclosing a metonymic reference to the first portrait in the second) and to characters in his novel we recognize from Stein's letter ("sundered sisters"). But details that might be referential are folded into passages such as that quoted above in which a background of repeated, idiomatic phrasing builds and eclipses denotation. Reference hardly seems to be the point, nor is it sufficient to account for the method of the portrait.

Instead, in the opening phrasing ("Now to follow one before the other"), Stein both proposes the compositional problem of the portrait and suggests how it might be resolved. Repeated with variations in the portrait, this phrasing has been understood to refer to the second portrait of Van Vechten following on the first. And so it does, but it signals the formal problem at hand as well. The problem in writing second portraits that Stein faced was their "second-ness." Would a second portrait be compared to the first, "a sequel to One," and how would she avoid retrospection in a portrait that reflects on a longstanding friendship? Stein's excitement about the method of Van Vechten's novel suggests she has a strategy in mind.

Much as she had in the landscape plays, in her portrait Stein experiments with the painterly conceit of figure–ground to discover if she might transform a temporal property, succession, into a spatial one, that of simultaneous relation. Foreground might reverse places with background if these are treated as spatial planes of painterly composition rather than as story elements. The painterly conceit of figure–ground might be rotated around to a single frontal plane, evacuating depth of field. A succession of elements that "follow one before the other" can extend across the pure simultaneity of a picture plane, or as Stein wrote in her letter: "To follow one before the other. Now to follow one before the other, and that's it." As she had learned to do in the landscape plays, Stein experiments with sustaining the temporal paradox of duration and immediacy in the compositional space of the unfolding portrait surface so that there will be no need to summarize the long history of her friendship with Van Vechten or to make continuity depend upon the illusion of time passing or of chronological sequence. "To follow one before the other," a line that carries over from the letter to the portrait is oddly phrased, and it may well be what held Stein's interest. We are more likely to say, "To follow one

after another." Although perfectly colloquial, in the phrase "To follow one before the other," "one" comes *before* "the other" making the phrasing "To follow" sound strange—as if "one" followed another which it doesn't (in the phrase it comes before). Whereas when we say, "To follow one after another," the word "another" does come after "one" and seems to "follow" it. Line breaks in the portrait show Stein working out the noncongruence between word order and the sense expressed by the phrase. The line breaks and doubling of the terms "one" and "before" accentuate the oddness of the phrase, "Now to follow one before the other." In fact, the line breaks seem designed to reconcile word order and sense. In its placement on the page "One before" does "follow" the "one" of the previous line and at the same time it comes before "the other" of the subsequent line. Stein has made succession simultaneous.

The word "before" proves to be a highly generative term for the formal investigation underway—it is part of the problem and part of the solution. How can sequence be rendered simultaneous? One way is through the shifting temporal and spatial senses of the word "before." Depending on context, "before" indicates sequence (as in "one comes before two"), and it can also mean standing "before" as the foreground appears to be *in front of* or *before* the background. "Before" is a compound of "be" and "for" and as such a handy condensation of what appears now to be at issue for Stein in portraiture—the relation of "being" to the modality and potentiality implied by the preposition "for" among others. In place of a depiction of "what they do or how they do it," these will be portraits that investigate the varied possibilities in the manner of "existing" (*LIA* 291). Will what follows be a portrait, the opening lines ask, of "Or as he was./ Or as he does[.]" or a combination, "Or does he/As he was"? However complicated by further associations, the statements of the Hemingway portrait seem anchored by a referential gesture missing in the Van Vechten portrait.

By acknowledging the difficulty in the portrait method, the way a curtain of "background" material obscures its subject, we can reframe the challenges of reading as method when we consider the problems or questions constituted for portraiture by this compositional strategy. Instead of reading past the textual surface, rendering it "background" for referential detail, we might recognize that the portrait is chiefly comprised of rhetorical expressions including "in general," "as in," and "for instance." These are idiomatic expressions that ordinarily introduce a metadiscursive relation, where what follows is rendered an example of a more general claim,

concept, or principle. However, as in "An Elucidation," this wording seems to be auditioned for its own sake. Obviously, in blocking the metadiscursive operation of these expressions, Stein reveals that such phrasings typically render one layer of the text as "background" to another. Where the phrase "for instance" would introduce an example, in Stein's portrait nothing becomes the "instance" of something else; instead the "background" spreads in variation on the phrase: "For instance as this instance as an instance, the instance is, there is an instance, for instance."[27]

Clearly this phrasing is a rehearsal of the compositional problems implicated in writing portraiture, and of writing a second portrait in particular. Among the many instances, which is "the instance" that is *the* "for instance"? That is, must the portrait depict characteristic attributes or actions, and must it be structured through the substitution and selection that render certain events exemplary? If so, is "an instance" of an impression as good as any other? What are the implications for time? Is portraiture a matter of selecting a time frame, and rendering a particular instant into "an instance" because it is characteristic? The possibilities rendered merely by varying article or shifters (this instance/an instance/the instance/for instance) suggest that we might consider that no such characteristic instance exists and any "instance" is equally viable. We can then read the sentence as a critical appraisal of representational practices in portraiture that determine how "this instance" comes to be rendered "as an instance" when evidently it is one of many.

In sum, the Van Vechten portrait is much occupied with the compositional problem of writing a second portrait. While I cannot devote space to a close reading, I hope in my brief commentary to suggest the rewards of reading for the questions that arise when this is the compositional task rather than for a conventional portrait subject discerned against a backdrop of less significant detail. Reading the portrait in the series of "Subject-Cases" and "An Elucidation," it is evident that Stein borrows methods from her landscape experiments with figure–ground to create the effects of compositional immediacy in place of making nostalgic reflection the basis for the portrait. In what follows, I offer a close reading of Stein's second portrait of Picasso, "If I Told Him A Completed Portrait Of Picasso," in order to show how a critical approach informed by her epistemology might attempt to keep pace with the unfolding experiment of the text including its resistance to the conventions of representation. The stakes are compelling because, by insisting that these texts are portraits, Stein challenges us to examine the concept of knowledge underlying

representation, and explores what constitutes a portrait when knowing is not a summary of characteristics but a compositional event.

Exacting Expression Not Exact Resemblance: "If I Told Him A Completed Portrait Of Picasso" (1923)

A remarkably rhythmic and appealing text, Stein's second portrait of Picasso has been popular since its writing. It was originally published in April 1924 in *Vanity Fair* and is perennially included in anthologies of Stein's work. An audio file of Stein reading "If I Told Him A Completed Portrait Of Picasso" is available online.[28] Although the portrait has received much critical attention, interpretation continues to instate representational conventions. Certainly, the difficulty of the portrait method presents a formidable obstacle. "If I Told Him" is written in a style that relies heavily on monosyllabic words, particularly shifters and modifiers, whose exacting operations result in an anti-mimetic, monochromatic surface. Indeed, one critic proposes that "If I Told Him" can serve as an example of what her detractors deem "solipsistic" and nonsensical in a Stein text.[29] Yet another obstacle to critical understanding of the portrait stems from its apparent subject and its claims for portraiture. Understandably, critics are tempted to read the portrait of Picasso for biographical clues and to emphasize referential elements of the portrait in order to address its textual opacity. Readings based on a biographical interpretation select elements accordingly, often omitting much of the text and, as I will explain, reading past the method of the portrait and undermining its experiment. For as many critics note, Stein's portraits deliberately contest conventions of representation based on resemblance. By resemblance is meant the expectation that the portrait be a likeness of the subject, reproducing his or her appearance in physical and characteristic attributes in keeping with realist conventions. But not only does Stein's text refuse to conform to an expectation that portraiture is the art of resemblance, it has also proven highly resistant to interpretation as an experimental text that "makes sense" in the compositional terms of its unfolding verbal surface.

When Stein visited Picasso and his family in Antibes on the Riviera late in the summer of 1923, the two reaffirmed their friendship after a period of cooling.[30] Picasso's mother was also visiting and Stein met her for the first time (*ABT* 221). Despite its apparent critique of resemblance, "If I

Told Him" continues to be read on the basis of likeness, as though the resemblance of Picasso and Napoleon were at issue.[31] This results in privileging the opening lines:

> If I told him would he like it. Would he like it if I told him.
> Would he like it would Napoleon would Napoleon would would he like it.
> If Napoleon if I told him if I told him if Napoleon. Would he like it if I told him if I told him if Napoleon. Would he like it if Napoleon if Napoleon if I told him. If I told him if Napoleon if Napoleon if I told him. If I told him would he like it would he like it if I told him. (*SR* 464)

This passage has been read as though Stein staged a comparison of the two men, posing the question, "would [Picasso] like it if I told him" that he resembles Napoleon (453)? Dydo concludes flatly, "Picasso is Napoleon, the builder of new empires and the conqueror of women."[32] Steven Meyer claims that Picasso, "the intense little Iberian" has become "the emperor of modern painting."[33] While in her first portrait, "Picasso" (1909 or 1910), Stein suggests that he had a "following," if she draws a comparison of Picasso and Napoleon in her second portrait, what does she mean by it?[34] Oddly, the text does not complete the comparison. Does it mock Picasso's hubris or is it cautionary? The portrait presents particular challenges for criticism *because* it is a portrait of Picasso about whom much is known; readers may assume that they recognize biographical references or can second-guess Stein's stance toward her subject.

In an early study of Stein's innovation in portraiture, for example, Steiner finds in the second portraits "a difficult but discoverable reference to the portrait subject" and "portrait perception involving comparison and memory."[35] But whereas in "Picasso," Steiner claims that the repetition and variation of phrasing raise epistemological questions concerning "what is known of the subject, and what the mode of this knowledge is," she finds that repetition and variation in "If I Told Him" is only "ornamental." It would seem that Steiner reaches this conclusion because she has determined the "meaning of [its] initial question," namely, that "If I told him would he like it" entails a "comparison of Picasso with Napoleon (both dynamic but diminutive leaders)."[36] Although Steiner notes several metadiscursive elements of the portrait including Stein's examination of mimesis, repetition, and "the whole Picasso/Napoleon metaphor," she interprets the end of the portrait based on the resemblance: "For if

Picasso is like Napoleon, and if Napoleon was eventually beaten, and if history teaches, then Picasso should realize that he is in trouble. (By this time Picasso had turned away from cubism to neoclassicism and Stein was growing less and less enthusiastic about his work.)"[37] My intention isn't to single out Steiner, but rather to claim that little has changed in analysis of this portrait when biographical reference remains the basis of interpretation. This approach will be limited insofar as it regards the opening and closing lines of the portrait as a key to the whole, neglects the density and resistance of the portrait's overall method, and reinstates genre conventions for reference.[38] The persistent wish to resolve the comparison of Napoleon and Picasso, to uncover the portrait's "secret," reveals the expectation that despite its qualifications, "exact resemblance" is instrumental to the portrait, and this, in one way or another, devolves into the expectation that the portrait presents a resemblance. In a history of the literary portrait, Ulla Haselstein explains that while classical studies of character were not visually based, the modern term "literary portrait" suggests its competition with the mimeticism of portrait painting, and that the literary portrait strove "to achieve some sort of plastic presence of the individual by literary means," in addition to aspects it could presumably do better, including representing "psychological traits held to be essential for the represented subject."[39] While for Haselstein, Stein's literary portraiture "amounts to a modernist reinvention of the genre" she concludes that Stein "retains [its] most fundamental feature, namely its referentiality."[40]

And yet, reading Stein's portrait of Picasso for resemblance means adhering to conventions of representation based on an epistemology of "knower" and "known," and on the dualism of subjects and objects that is predicated in propositions. Stein lampoons this form of knowledge in a later section of the portrait in lines that reiterate the predicative form "He is" as if she began (but failed to complete) multiple propositions: "He is and as he is, and as he is and he is, he is and as he and he and as he is and he and he and and he and he" (465). It may seem that the challenge in reading Stein's portrait of Picasso is that we cannot know the Picasso she knew and chose to represent and that we do not understand the method of representation at hand. But as I have suggested, in order to analyze the method of the portrait we must understand that it is based on a radical epistemology, one that defies conventional expectations about knowing another and representing that experience. Stein's portrait presses us to consider what constitutes portraiture when the operations of similarity and difference underlying representation are not used to stage a stable

comparison, or, to put this in the terms of the portrait, when "exactitude" is much practiced, but not in the service of verisimilitude and realistic likeness. Reading selectively for biographical reference means reading past the intricate compositional surface (and the bulk of the portrait) and treating language use as if it were transparent in its referential function. In effect, this biographical interpretation of the portrait's references reinstates a model of representation that the portrait contests: despite its teasing invitation to read for resemblance to Picasso, the historical subject, Stein's portraiture resists or undermines the expectation that the portrait be a likeness of its subject, as if enacting a Cubist challenge to representational practice.

We do well to remember Rosalind Krauss's strenuous objections to biographical interpretations of Cubist collage in her essay, "In the Name of Picasso." To reduce interpretation of Picasso's paintings to the proper name (of his then current lover, typically), Krauss argues, is to treat the proper name as if it has no sense other than reference and to treat visual representation as merely a picture or label for the object. As we shall see, Stein's portrait makes much use of Picasso's name. But her method, as Krauss claims for the word fragments in Picasso's paintings, involves "a rather more exacting notion of reference, representation and signification."[41] Over the howls of those familiar with the Cubist analogies to Stein's work, I propose that the comparison proves a useful visual analogy for Stein's method of splintering referential operations and elaborating the difference between denotative and expressive aspects of propositions.[42] Viewers have become adept at recognizing how referential details in a Cubist painting cease to be referential, entering instead into a complex set of visual and verbal associations that mines expressive qualities and explores the practice of signification. Likewise, for Stein's portrait of Picasso, we need a strategy for tracking the intratextual elaboration that forms the portrait surface, a strategy for reading as Marjorie Perloff has recommended, "semiotically rather than referentially, 'in' rather than 'for'."[43] This strategy should help to interpret details that appear to involve reference or elicit our expectations of reference as it contributes to representation. But perhaps the test of my approach is that it also proves useful for the quirky references of the portrait, such as the allusion to Paul Revere's warning signal, that continue to baffle critics because these cannot be readily fixed by biographical reference.[44]

The epistemology Stein develops in her landscape experiments offers a complex model for understanding the use of referential detail in her portrait

of Picasso and for radically reformulating the model of knowledge we assume underlies the method of her second portraits. As I have discussed, in successive experiments with figure–ground, Stein disrupts language use corresponding to a representational theory of knowledge, including the positive determination of a predicate logic that assigns places and parts, to return to Stein's terms, in such a way that renders conjunctive and disjunctive relations background. Through the landscape experiments, she discovers how to suspend a spatial dimension at the sentence level and in the compositional totality in which she can articulate a lively expressive dimension that, while it entails referential or indexical gestures, is not representational, that is, mimetic in realist detail or fictional. Putting this in the terms of Deleuze's philosophy of language, when Stein obstructs the determination of subjects and objects, and the conventional operations of denotation and signification, she demonstrates that there is an expressive dimension of language that is not accounted for in these modes of the proposition. Sense, or in Stein's terms, "the essence of what happens," is released by articulating the difference between the expressive dimension of language (the capacity of language to attribute) and that of denotation. Sense is neither entirely an effect of words, their uncanny ability to express with or without a speaker, nor of things, the attributes of objects or of states of affairs, but the modulation of their difference. Stein's phrases are double-sided, ceaselessly relating "the recent objects of attention"—capital cities, buttons, maps, water—not as objects for fictive characters, but rather to abstract the capacity of language *to relate*. The sense of "what happens" in the landscape plays, as we have seen, results from this uncanny form of expression: it emerges as variation in intricately calibrated series, or as the modulation in the intensity of relations incrementally and across the composition.

If on Stein's radical model "knowing" is a surface event constituted by the articulation of the difference between denotative and expressive aspects of the proposition, we cannot hope to understand her second portrait of Picasso if we settle for conventional reference or denotation. Evidently, certain lines of the portrait entail reference to biography, both to Picasso and Stein's life, past and present, along with references to painting and to the compositional problems of writing the portrait. But we are not sufficiently subtle when we reduce the referential gesture of the portrait to a matter of denotation, and none of these references singularly or in combination gives us the meaning of the portrait. In the portrait, Stein persistently qualifies denotation with expressive qualities, including the complex modality suggested by the demonstrative adverb *as*.

A note.
They cannot.
A float.
They cannot
They dote. (466)

Reading the portrait selectively for reference, we may neglect the intricate hinging and unhinging action that results from the recurrence of the mercurial word *as*, in its persistent interruption and qualification of denotation. The predicative "He is" must be continually modified by "as he is," which suggests a problem of "knowing" and therefore a problem for writing. Or, as Stein would ask in "Portraits And Repetition," a later lecture, "I wondered is there any way of making what I know come out as I know it, come out not as remembering" (LIA 297). Reading for references, we miss Stein's experiments with the operations of reference and representation, including her efforts to abstract the expressive dimensions of resemblance and difference and to redirect these to the textual surface.

Neither should we expect that Stein's second portrait will be a likeness of Picasso, a summary of his character, or a record of Stein's experience of Picasso. We have allowed that this is a modernist portrait, but not altered our expectations accordingly, including recognizing that in its method it questions "what the pursuit of likeness now looks like" as T.J. Clark says of Cubist portraiture.[45] The opening passage of the portrait playfully anticipates and frustrates our expectations of portraiture based on resemblance insofar as Stein teases that she has withheld an important assertion. Readers can be excused for feeling that the resemblance has been broached off-stage or completed before we began reading: "Would he like it" (*what?*) "If I told him" (*told him what?*). The portrait pointedly does not answer this sort of question for which the answer is a summary statement. Instead, Stein reflects on her method: to have posed repeated questions in the passage amounts to "askings" and this prompts a subsequent line, "Exactly as **as kings**" (464). What might be read as a veiled slight concerning Picasso's hubris (he, like Napoleon, thinks himself imperial) becomes a material aspect of the text that produces sense in at least two dimensions: first by extending the surface of the text on a contiguous axis, the word "kings" summons the word "queens." Second, by abstracting the word "as" from the word "askings" and the phrase "as kings," Stein initiates one of the chief occupations of the text which is to subject propositions to the operations of modality. She blocks the denotative and

signifying dimensions of a proposition (implied reference to Napoleon and Picasso and the concept hubris) and renders the statement expressive, or more exactly, proceeds by refusing to fix denotation and amplifying expressive aspects of the proposition instead: "Exactly as as kings."

In place of resemblance or representation, what we want to identify is the expression of the portrait, that is, the sense expressed by statements as these enter into relations with others. Sense is a product of the text, not a record of Stein's impressions of Picasso, and as such, it is multiple, contingent, and elusive. This necessarily raises difficulties for criticism: if the text is making sense and this cannot be arrested, how can we analyze or interpret the portrait? Provided that we can circumvent our tendency to reassert the logic of predication perhaps we can trace the dynamic expression of the portrait if we attend not to names but to the intricate and multiple relations accruing and dissolving between equivalent terms. The portrait presents the exciting potential of making contact with possibilities as yet undetermined by predication for and by subjects as conventionally known. Although the event of the text is elusive, we can detect its compositional effects and identify the compositional problem staged by the particulars of the text. As I will demonstrate, a number of series cross the portrait and the textual event transpires in the resulting expression as elements of each series resound in relation to those of other series and to other variables in the text. In place of tracing resemblance, we can examine the compositional problem articulated by the main attributes of the text, including its insistent rhythms, monochromatic reduction, obsession with modality, and its unyielding surface.

Interpretation of "If I Told Him" involves coming to terms with the implications for portraiture of Stein's extreme reliance on relational parts of speech. This is functional language that refers to the orientation and relation of states of affairs as well as to relations among other parts of speech within the sentence establishing quantity, sequence, and manner of connection as well as other relations. It is the language of exactness. Stein placed a high premium on exactitude, a quality she associated with her own work and that of Juan Gris (*ABT* 211). It is characteristic of Stein's inventiveness and her sense of humor that she should practice exactitude for other than mimetic ends. Although a dominant characteristic of Stein's second portraits is a display of exactness, such exactitude no longer renders likeness. Instead, Stein "exacts" subtle differences in the varying senses imparted by the operations of prepositions, articles, and adverbs. The composition forms as an intricate survey of the directional, conjunc-

tive, demonstrative, and expressive implications suggested by transitive relations. This exacting practice simultaneously critiques the limitations of representation and creates a new compositional totality.

The following passage serves as an example of Stein's exacting practice. It has been read as sealing the resemblance of Picasso to Napoleon.

> Exact resemblance. To exact resemblance the exact resemblance as exact as a resemblance, exactly as resembling, exactly resembling, exactly in resemblance exactly a resemblance, exactly and resemblance. For this is so. Because. (SR 464)

Surely we hear the irony in the phrase, "as exact as a resemblance"—as exact as *that*! In this passage, "to exact resemblance" signals a bid to "exact" difference, not similarity. We are confronted with differences that concern singularity of outcome in our expectations of both exactitude and resemblance (the difference between "*the* exact resemblance," and "*a* resemblance"); differences implied by inserting modality ("exactly *as* resembling" versus "exactly resembling"); and differences enacted when "exactly" is considered independently ("exactly and resemblance") and when it is considered one of the practices of establishing resemblance ("exactly in resemblance"). In place of resemblance, this is dissembling and with purpose: it exposes, rather economically, the dissembling entailed in finding resemblance, including that we can identify stable points of comparison and that the outcome will be singular. Instead, Stein suggests that the difference between "resembling" and "a resemblance" is worth exploring. Reading on, we are presented with the difference between "The first exactly" and "At first exactly," between "Presently" and "As presently," between "As trains" and "Has trains," and between "Father and farther" (465). Once we recognize that this process of "exacting" difference is the method of the entire portrait, it becomes evident that something more than a resemblance of Picasso and Napoleon is afoot.

I will return to this bid "to exact resemblance," but first I want to explore the way in which Stein complicates the comparison she suggests between Picasso and Napoleon in the opening passages of the portrait: "If I told him would he like it. Would he like it if I told him./ Would he like it would Napoleon would Napoleon would would he like it" (464). During the summer before leaving Paris for the south of France, Stein wrote the play, "Am I To Go Or I'll Say So." In the play, an anonymous general is engaged in a functional war with the operations of the word *general*: "For

a general./Before the general./In this case not in general" (*O&P* 116). The portrait "If I Told Him" reprises the following passage from the play:

> The general likes.
> If he likes.
> If he likes to be told.
> And if he likes it to be told.
> And if he likes it as well.
> And if he tells as well.
> And if to tell.
> And as if to tell.
> Very well. (*O&P* 116)

This echo across texts should give us pause when framing a comparison of Picasso and Napoleon, "both dynamic but diminutive leaders."[46] We might instead understand the singsong reference to Napoleon as a knowing comment on the limitations of conventional portraiture that relies on relating individual to type. In 1921, Gris published a statement in *L'Esprit Nouveau* illustrating his "deductive method" of painting with what would become a famous example of bottles made from cylinders. Subjugating subject matter to composition, the "deductive method" entailed "mov[ing] from the general to the particular rather than the particular to the general."[47] Likewise, in Stein's portrait, both Napoleon and Picasso will need to be rendered "general" in order for the totality and autonomy of the composition to emerge as "particular." Provocative as it is, the bid to "exact resemblance" is misleading; the portrait doesn't develop the resemblance of Picasso to Napoleon. Instead, Stein takes pains to dissolve the particulars associated with these figures into neutral compositional elements by means of a "mad internal multiplying" of relational terms.[48] Composition first and foremost, and subject matter only as a result, as Juan Gris insisted.[49]

If they are generals, what Picasso and Napoleon preside over is composition, and Stein seems to have associated the proper name "Picasso" with modern composition itself. In her 1932 monograph, *Picasso*, Stein credits the artist with replacing the Napoleonic general-on-horseback model.

> Really the composition of this war, 1914–1918, was not the composition of all previous wars, the composition was not a composition in which there was one man in the centre surrounded by a lot of other men but a composition that had neither a beginning nor an end, a composition of which

> one corner was as important as any other corner, in fact the composition of cubism. (*P* 11)

Let me begin at the end of the portrait so as to trick what James called our "habits of association" enough to see what the text makes of this initial pairing and of resemblance.[50] The last third of the portrait is composed mainly of a long, slender column of one- and two-word lines. The short succession of lines on the page is graphically striking and perhaps the equivalent of Stein's visual impression of striation at the seashore, the "movement of the tiny waves on the Antibes shore" (*ABT* 222). Surely it is an echo or corruption of the warning signal, "One if by land, and two if by sea," recounted in Longfellow's poem, "Paul Revere's Ride" (1861).

> One.
> I land.
> Two.
> I land.
> Three.
> The land.
> Three
> The land.
> Three
> The land. (466)

This seems to be a broken signal, returning always "land" and never "sea" until we appreciate the homonym "island" inscribed in "I land." Mention of an island must remind us of Napoleon's exile to Elba. If this seems far-fetched, consider that Napoleon landed near Antibes on his fateful return to the mainland from Elba. Perhaps the famous palindrome "Able was I ere I saw Elba" enables us to see that "able" is very nearly spelled in "P/ablo." The association implied to Revere, a hero of the American Revolutionary War, cleverly introduces the words "revere" and "revolution," although they do not appear in the portrait text. The word "revolution" complicates the pairing of Napoleon and Picasso, because now we realize that the portrait presents a series of revolutionary heroes: Picasso, whom Stein credited with the "Cubist revolution," joins Paul Revere of the American Revolution, and Stein herself, "An American Revolutionary of Prose,"[51] according to the title of an article published earlier that year in *Vanity Fair*. Napoleon, a son of the French Revolution who brought the revolutionary spirit to an end, is the odd one out.

However, the proper name Napoleon is itself a member of another series, that of enumerated emperors.

The reference to Revere introduces a series of "Pauls" in the portrait: there is Paul Revere, Paul Picasso (as he signed early work), and perhaps Paulo, Picasso's young son, who was two years old in the summer of 1923. Picasso celebrated the feast day of St. Paul. Obviously, the word "revere" raises questions about reverence in portraiture, but it also has a more local and concrete association to the "Riviera" where Stein met the vacationing Picasso family. It may also suggest Pierre Reverdy, the poet and a defender of Cubism who published the first issue of *Nord-Sud* in 1917. The journal was named for the metro line connecting Montmartre, where Picasso lived until 1912, and Montparnasse, two centers of the avant-garde. To this series we might also add Jacques Rivière, a contemporary commentator on Cubism. Rivière wrote astutely about the difficulties Cubism must confront in materializing depth while demonstrating the flatness of the picture: "Depth will appear as a subtle but visible slippage keeping the objects company; it will hardly matter that literally they remain on the same plane: between them will creep this positive distance this spacing produced by the little sloping shadows."[52]

But why should the portrait of Picasso include association to Paul Revere? In *Picasso*, Stein links the French and American revolutions, and repeats the observation she made on meeting Picasso's mother in the summer of 1923: "Physically Picasso resembles his mother whose name he finally took" (*P* 2, *ABT* 221). We learn also that "[h]is mother's family were silversmiths" (*P* 2). As any American schoolchild knows, Paul Revere was an accomplished silver smith. It is a happy accident of history that a man named *Revere* is credited with helping to usher in the American *Revolution*—an event that might be grossly characterized as a lack of *revere*nce for the English crown. It is a connection that Stein with her attention to proper names would not have missed. By means of association from Revere to Picasso's contemporaries Reverdy and Rivière, we discover splintered references to Picasso's contemporary context in the portrait much like the fragmented and multiplying references of Cubism. If these seem wild associations, my own misgiving is that they aren't wild enough. That is, what we want in a reading strategy is a way of treating reference as a fleeting gesture, to catch sight of its indexical motion and see this turned back to the portrait surface and elaborated, rather than allowing reference to fix meaning. None of these references is definitive; the fragments and their elaboration combine to form the totality of the composition.

But to return to the portrait: once we recognize Revere's warning signal we can't help but recognize another code-like sequence in a previous passage.

> Shutters shut and open so do queens. Shutters shut and shutters and so shutters shut and shutters and so and so shutters and so shutters shut and so shutters shut and shutters and so. And so shutters shut and so and also. And also and so and so and also. (464)

In both cases, the signaling operates through the effects of repetition. Here, the open vowel of "so" substitutes for the "open" position, permitting the shutters to continue to "shut" without having opened. Are these odd codes figures for signification itself? If so, Stein shows that it need not depend upon difference between signifiers—or not in any ordinary way—repetition alone can create difference. These passages invite the question, when is a code not a code, or when does it fail to signal? Perhaps Stein makes reference to the Code Napoléon, the civil code Napoleon I instituted in 1804, the year he established his empire. This would suggest that we are not to treat Napoleon as a stock figure for a defeated general. The Napoleonic Code set the tone for French civil life well into the twentieth century, and this rule of law governed Picasso and Stein's Paris. This set of laws granted the middle class equality, abolished privileges of birth, forbade labor unions, safeguarded property rights, and gave men control over their wives. It was because the Code Napoléon did not outlaw the practice of homosexuality that turn of the century Parisian salons could include the frank display of male homosexuality and, with greater discretion, the same-sex flirtations of women.[53]

Shutters, of course, also suggest the open window *motif* in painting in which a window frames a still life or the view of an exterior. In a rare instance in which he anticipated Picasso, Gris was the first to adapt the open window *motif* to Cubist practice in 1915.[54] Picasso painted a series of these paintings on a visit in 1919 to St. Raphael. In Stein's portrait, the stammering shutters keep readers on the surface of the text, thereby suggesting a condensed reference to the use of the open window *motif* as a metaphor for the lack of depth in the painting. Concerning Gris' practice, the artist historian Christopher Green observes, "The openness of the open windows was one of two options, the other was to close in the objects."[55] Stein's portrait takes up the latter option, creating a shallow plane through the dense iteration of relational words: we are unable

to establish the grounds for representation, refused a view to an exterior beyond the portrait surface. The illusion of depth and of movement in space is restricted to the surface planes of the text.

At least one line of the portrait speaks to Stein's awareness of the neoclassical figures Picasso was painting in 1922 and 1923. In her monograph, Stein described Picasso's *Deux Femmes Calligraphiées*, a small painting of two women dressed in long classical robes standing side by side. Her collection includes a painting from these years, *Calligraphic Still Life* (1922), and this may be the painting Stein thanks Picasso for in a postcard she sent him in February 1923.[56] Stein claimed that Picasso's "calligraphy" derived from Cubism, and that it was, for him, the equivalent of writing: "It is necessary to think about this question of calligraphy, it must never be forgotten that the only way Picasso has of speaking, the only way Picasso has of writing is with drawings and paintings" (*P* 38). In this she echoes Kahnweiler's observation about Picasso's work, "Painting and sculpture are *forms of writing*. Their products are signs, emblems, and not a mirror, more or less distorted, of the external world."[57] In *Deux Femmes Calligraphiées*, the women's hair and robes are composed of curling lines and wave patterns. In Stein's portrait, "robes" becomes "rob" and drawing that is writing is "quotable": "Can curls rob can curls quote, quotable" (465). Reference to painting as a "way of writing" is yet another way to link Picasso's art with Stein's own, multiplying the senses of "quot*able*" and once again embedding the word "able."

Let me return once more to the passage that begins, "Shutters shut and open so do queens." Suggesting as it does "shudders" this passage accounts for a good deal of the portrait's erotic charge. As others have observed, variations on the phrase "and so" rhyme visually and aurally with "Picasso."[58] Indeed, spelling out "Picasso" we see that much of the portrait derives from his name. In her monograph Stein emphasizes Picasso's vision, insisting on the uniqueness of his seeing things "as he saw them, as one can see when one has not the habit of knowing what one is looking at" (*P* 18). Picasso's name spells out "his vision," that is, "[P] I c [see] as so." Subsequent phrases are variations on Picasso's name including, "As a so" and "As even say so," and much of the portrait takes shape as the network of these punning fragments expands (466). The word "as" is itself a fragment, a shortened form of the Old English compound "all-so."[59] The text is composed—it "persists" as Stein says—by means of the extraordinary resourcefulness of these monosyllabic words.[60]

As a member of an enumerated series, the proper name Napoleon invites Stein to explore the operations of succession and the implications for representation when one term establishes a model by appearing "first." If in the following passage the first mention of "first" concerns Napoleon, the first emperor of France, who "came first," historically and in the portrait before Picasso, its iteration expands beyond biographical reference.

> Who came first Napoleon at first. Who came first Napoleon the first.
> Who came first, Napoleon first.
> Presently.
> Exactly do they do.
> First exactly.
> Exactly do they do too.
> First exactly.
> And first exactly.
> Exactly do they do.
> And first exactly and exactly.
> And do they do.
> At first exactly and first exactly and do they do.
> The first exactly.
> And do they do.
> The first exactly.
> At first exactly.
> First as exactly.
> As first as exactly.
> Presently.
> As presently.
> As as presently. (464–5)

The name Napoleon serves as an example of the operations of representation when these entail description or narration ("at first"), denotation ("the first"), or involve signification, the relation of one concept to another ("first"). Terms that would ordinarily establish succession or sequence ("At first") are prevented from doing so through an emphasis on modality ("As first") and an exploration of the differences expressed by temporal markers including "At first," "Presently," and "As presently." The passage is difficult because it simultaneously investigates the logical and temporal implications of succession. Terms such as "At first" that might initiate a logical declaration or proposition such that it identifies "first causes" or "initial premises" lose their capacity to frame such a statement when

modified by shifters. The certitude expressed by "First exactly" is qualified and diluted by variations ("And first exactly."/"The first exactly."/"At first exactly."). Which of these clauses expresses the primacy of a first cause and is this primacy necessary for the practice of exactitude? We have ventured far from the one-for-one indexical gesture that identifies "Napoleon the first." Indeed, the illusion of the punctual subject is shattered by the subtle differences in time sense suggested between "Presently" and "At first." But what is the difference between "As presently" and "As as presently?" This stammering dramatizes the operations of "as" and calls our attention to the difference in expression between "First exactly" and "First as exactly."

This steady ticking of differences forms the surface of the text; it is the "guarantor of [its] totality" much like the grid of Cubism."[61] We cannot read selectively for a resemblance of Picasso without acknowledging that in so doing we disregard a main characteristic of the text, namely that proper names such as "Napoleon," or nouns such as "kings" and "shutters" emerge only momentarily before they are splintered and absorbed in an intricate set of relations that will not ground stable representation. As in a Cubist grid of 1912, the unfolding surface of Stein's portrait both generates and contains this kind of action, "the effort at likeness, the opening into depth."[62]

The Cubist analogy holds not because the portrait subject is Picasso (second portraits of Carl Van Vechten and of Alice Toklas also practice this style) but because Cubist fragmentation and elaboration of referential detail provide a useful visual analogy for Stein's method of deferring denotation and expanding expressive aspects of propositions. As in the Cubist grid, reference in Stein's portrait is open-ended; it isn't fixed by identification and doesn't stop at names. Clearly the phrase "Napoleon the first" in the passage above does not merely refer to the historical person but serves to initiate an inquiry concerning succession in its logical and temporal domains. We have to read the entire passage in order to hear the difference that emerges as the certainty of denotation ("the first") is highjacked by the expression of temporal and modal variations. This recursive method of endlessly mining the denotative gesture for expressive properties forms the surface of the text and motivates its successive moves. Likewise, referential detail we may identify in a Cubist painting enters into a complex set of visual and verbal associations that deploys its expressive qualities and explores, as Krauss claims, the "structure of signification" itself.[63]

Since the Cubist grid is hardly a monolithic entity, let me briefly summarize the accounts that inform my discussion. Art historians differ on whether to regard the grid of 1912 as the extension of the Cubism of the years 1908–10 or whether to regard this development as a discontinuous break. For Pepe Karmel, whose study is based on extensive research of Picasso's drawings, the grid is the next step in continuous investigations concerning figuration and projective space. According to Karmel, Picasso and Braque invented the rectilinear grid sometime in the winter of 1909–10 by rotating the two-dimensional diagonal lattice of paintings such as Picasso's *Three Women* (1907–08) or Braque's 1908 landscapes. The Cubist "grid" is a misleading term insofar as it implies a regular pattern of horizontal and vertical lines, whereas what is meant is something more like three-dimensional scaffolding. The grid was the outcome of Picasso and Braque's experiments with open form and, as such, a cleaner break with verisimilitude than the faceted Cubism of 1908–09 whose vocabulary of flat, geometric shapes could be interpreted as distortions of the human form. Paintings of 1909 such as Picasso's *Seated Woman* integrated figure and background through an intricate system of faceting but at the cost of pictorial space—the "sensation of depth was squeezed out of the canvas."[64]

Struggling with open form meant reconfiguring the relation of the body or object to surrounding space. Picasso's initial efforts were intensely spare; even loyal supporters such as Kahnweiler lost faith, deeming these paintings "unfinished." In a painting such as Picasso's *Nude* done in Cadaqués in 1910, the figure dissolves into a stark, abstract composition of lines and planes. This is the period in Picasso's life that Clark calls "grim."[65] While Stein and her brother Leo were among Picasso's principal supporters—between 1905 and 1909 they purchased thirty-five of his paintings—during these years they too ceased to buy his paintings.[66] Karmel claims Picasso inserted Stein's calling card in the painting later titled *The Architect's Table* as a deliberate enticement to regain her support, but it is also true that the paintings of 1912 were more likely to appeal to Stein as they did to others.

According to Karmel, by 1912 Picasso made new figurative use of the grid, which gave him a new "armature" for the figure and an approach that replaced naturalistic conventions without relinquishing the "power of sculptural form," the mass of the figure and the volume of the setting.[67] A "radically inorganic structure,"[68] the grid was an appealing solution because it provided a substitute for the human skeleton and a new way

to evoke projective space. Within the grid, planes and curves advance or recede by virtue of shading rather than naturalistic perspective. The combination of overlapping forms and shading constituted a new kind of projective space no longer anchored to the base of the picture.

Clark objects to the "commitment to narrative continuity" in accounts of Cubism from 1907 to 1912 because it obscures the "disconnected quality" of the Cubist grid itself.[69] In his view, paintings of 1911–12 from the "classic moment" of Cubism, paintings such as Picasso's *Man with a Pipe* (1911) for example, are not an extension of the experiments begun in Horta in 1910. According to Clark, Picasso backed away from the extreme sparseness of the 1910 paintings, and during his stay in Céret in the summer of 1911 he opened his painting outward to the world again, admitting light into the grid as the means of creating a totality. The Cubism that followed takes hold of the world, "[t]he grid shivers again with Cézanne's perceptual uncertainties." But it is also, for Clark, an acknowledgment of failure, namely the failure to find an alternative model of representation. Clark concludes that the Cubism of 1911 investigates the means of illusionism, and in so doing it "gives a metaphorical account of what the pursuit of likeness now looks like."[70]

The "pursuit of likeness" has bearing on Stein's work, but before returning to it, I first want to underscore that for these art historians flatness per se was not the issue in Cubism. Karmel asserts, "absolute flatness, eliminating volume as well as mass, was essentially antipathetic to Picasso."[71] Clark claims that "owning up to flatness" in Cubist painting proved to be more difficult than the avant-garde had imagined: "It would only be done by discovering what it was in flatness that could be put utterly at the service of the depiction of depth; it would only be by having the surface be chock-full, almost overwhelmed, by spatiality—having the surface in some sense *be* depth, be its complete and sufficient realization—that the true force of painting's confinement to two dimensions would be made clear."[72] As I have argued, once we cease to read selectively for biographical reference, Stein's portrait of Picasso presents readers with a non-yielding surface, one that does not readily disclose a naturalistic resemblance of its subject. Like the Cubist surface so "chock-full" that it suggests spatial depth, the polysemy of Stein's language use creates a portrait surface full of spaces opened and only momentarily filled by the shifting senses of relational terms. The homogeneity of the portrait surface, which can seem a barrier, unfolds, revealing panel after panel of surface planes. These textual spaces open through the nuanced variation suggested in manners of approach,

direction, handling, and apprehension. In an approximation of Cubist experiments with open form, Stein's repeated stress on the conjunctive functions of the word *as* forms a hinge between solid forms and surrounding space, and reveals the myriad transitive relations made possible in the space typically foreclosed by attention to substantives. Representation is ungrounded by the peculiar eruption of the word *as*. Its constant iteration without fixing its modality demonstrates that the referential gesture might be expressive, procedural, and open to constant realignment. Insofar as it modifies manner, the adverbial *as* suggests that many modalities are possible. In expressing conjunction, it reveals that relations are contingent and reversible, and in metaphoric expression in which one thing is seen *as* another, it reveals the equivalence of terms.

In addition, Stein heightens the expressive dimension of the textual surface by exaggerating rhythmic properties of the portrait. The passage that begins "[s]hutters shut and open so do queens" is one such example. Following on the opening passage with its rhythmic, unanswered question, "[w]ould he like it if I told him," we begin to detect a pattern of blocking the answering response: the shutters operate like a coded sequence, returning always the same signal, much as the question recurs without answer. And yet a great deal transpires on the textual surface merely by interrupting and abstracting the code-like expression of signification itself, the pairing of signifier/signified, or the binary of question and response, or of shutters open or closed. With so much elaboration, clearly the passage does not concern denotation (whether the shutters shut), but instead creates a pronounced rhythm that abstracts the expression "to shut." As I have suggested, that the shutters shut without opening is not a bad figure for the way that depth emerges from the surface of a Cubist painting. In Stein's portrait, the passage is uniquely expressive without relying on illusionistic depth: it echoes the proscenium space of open window paintings, it alludes to the signaling function of signification and demonstrates that it depends on difference, and it engenders a real sense of movement (of shutters that shut) without involving mimetic representation.

This is where the Cubist analogy serves us well; the strategies we have for tracing the complexity of referential gestures without limiting the meaning of the painting to representation prove useful in interpreting Stein's portrait where reference does not fix meaning. Consider the intricate play of references to Braque and "that famous return from Le Havre" in Picasso's painting *Violin and Anchor* (1912). How are the violin, anchor, and pipe of the painting connected? Karmel suggests that the

original title of the painting, "Le Violin d'Ingres," may refer to the 1911 performance of famed violinist Jean Kubelik at the Ingres exhibition at the Galeries Georges Petit. At the recital, Kubelik performed on a violin once owned by Ingres. Picasso and Braque most likely did not attend the concert, but they would have been learned of it from André Salmon's announcement in the *Paris-Journal*. Both Picasso and Braque introduced violins into their paintings around this time. "Le violin d'Ingres" refers to a hobby pursued with intensity and as such may refer to Braque's own hobby which was playing the concertina (a small accordion). And the anchor? Braque, who came from Le Havre (lettering in the painting reads "[H]AVRE"), was fond of visiting bars frequented by sailors. In his 1913 *The Cubist Painters*, Apollinaire wrote of "that famous return from Le Havre," the return of Picasso and Braque from a visit to Le Havre in April 1912.[73] That "Kubelik" spells out a connection to Cubism was not lost on Picasso and Braque. Braque painted the name in a 1912 still-life that also implies punning reference to the "Maggi-Kub," a bouillon cube.[74] Concerning interpretation of these signs, Karmel asserts that *Violin and Anchor* "is replete with symbols and biographical allusions; [but] whether these add up to a meaning, or any kind of paraphrasable content, is another question."[75]

Similarly, as I have shown, Stein's second portrait of Picasso contains "episodes of likeness," or referential tokens, in the series of Pauls, the calligraphic curl, allusion to Picasso's mother and so on. The shutters that open and close with erotic suggestiveness may allude to the theatricality of the open window *motif* in Picasso's paintings, as well as to the Napoleonic code of permissions and restrictions. But none of these references fix the meaning of the portrait; instead, the work of the portrait is to transform these elements into a new totality. Reference is splintered and multiplied, its indexical gesture is doubled back to the textual surface where it is inscribed and expands in a complex grid of interrelated associations and intratextual elaboration. We read elements of the portrait most productively when we give free rein to potential references and connections, granting the "means of illusionism" their full powers of suggestion all the while resisting the temptation to fix denotation and determine likeness. The portrait is not a summary statement of Picasso's character, nor a rendering of Stein's impression of his intensity. Rather, it is an effort to express "knowing" him as an event of the text where knowing is expression, the sense of propositions as they transpire and as sense is released in series that cross the text. The multiple series are expressive because they defer denotation

and signification, opening up the space for multiple and reversible connections among elements. The series of revolutionary heroes (Paul Revere/Stein/Picasso) complicates the initial comparison implied (Picasso and Napoleon), but at the same time, this series reveals another related to the word "revere" (revere/reverence/revolution), which in turn complicates our reading of the first. To these two series we must add the series of Pauls that includes Paul Revere, Picasso's son, and Picasso who initially signed his paintings Paul. There is the series of codes (of which the warning signal is one), and the series including contemporaries (Rivière/Reverdy), to which we must add place, the Riviera. Clearly, we cannot reduce the splintering, multiplying connections possible within and among these series to a summary statement concerning Picasso's irreverence or that of Stein in writing his portrait. Stein has written the portrait so that its meaning is impossible to rephrase or summarize, staging the event of the text instead as an action or activity of the text that ensues as we trace the varied senses expressed by means of multiple series. Taken together, the multiple series comprise the textual surface and determine the compositional problem formulated in the text which concerns the relation of particulars to the general; questions concerning reverence in relation to revolution, painting, and portraiture; the practice of signification; and the uses of exactitude in exacting difference. None of these strands determines the theme or subject of the portrait. Rather, sense is expressed when the denotative aspect of the serial elements is crossed by the shifting senses of *as* in its variable operations indicating manner, time sense, and modality.

What becomes then of Stein's bid for exactitude? Her reliance on monosyllabic words and adverbial relations involves the text in much "truing and fairing" of the kind Clark describes in Cubism. The sense of "Presently" is modified by "As presently" and "exact" by "exactly." Both in word choice and in method, the portrait is obsessed with exactness. Likewise, of Picasso's paintings at Céret Clark claims: "The way painting continues, it turns out, is by counterfeiting necessity (on the surface) but having one's metaphors of matter reinstate (on the surface) pure contingency at every point."[76] Isn't this a fair account of Stein's method as well? As if there were some depiction or task that the incessant adjustments were aimed at, some necessity for the "exactness" Stein keeps insisting on that doesn't ever really pan out, or not with the urgency suggested. And isn't her method similar— her use of the words *as, so, at, also*—words whose meanings are contingent on context?

In the stammering iterations of the portrait, its obsession with "the exact resemblance as exact as a resemblance, exactly as resembling," Stein only pretends to pursue likeness. This "exacting" process, as we have seen, is more accurately an exploration of the inexactitude of mimetic practices. Yet, in this elaborate and humorous pretense, Stein may in fact capture a critical aspect of Picasso's painting in 1912, a method that Clark calls "painting on the basis of as if."[77] According to Clark, by the time Picasso painted *Ma Jolie* (1911–12), *The Architect's Table* (1912), and *Man with a Pipe* (1911), he had understood that an alternative to representation was not possible. Clark treats the paintings done in Céret and on Picasso's return to Paris as "counterfeiting" an alternative system of representation.

> "What would it be like," these paintings ask, "to have a new means of representing the world, and have those means be complete and efficient, with the power to discriminate a whole other set of aspects to visual—maybe mental—appearance? "It would be like this." Not that the pictures actually do discriminate such another set of aspects, but they succeed in imagining, and indeed representing, what such a discrimination would involve, what the signs of it would be—as regards pictorial density, for instance, or flexibility and exquisiteness of handling, or thickness of clues to spatial location.[78]

Likewise, it would be a mistake to think that the exacting method of Stein's portrait somehow constitutes a likeness of Picasso that we could recognize if only we understood the language of the portrait. Instead, like Picasso, Stein depicts "what the pursuit of likeness now looks like," now that she has exposed the *as* at the heart of representation—the doubling and inexactness of comparison, the displacements and substitutions of illusionism.[79] If it were possible to portray a likeness of Picasso, "[t]o exact resemblance," it would entail parsing an impossibly intricate set of subtle differences among the contingent terms that determine relation. It must expose the doubling of resemblance ("Exactly as as kings."); splinter and multiply reference (Napoleon/Picasso/Revere/Reverdy/Rivière/Riviera/Stein); amplify contingency exponentially; and demonstrate that handling matters, that the relational nexus of knowing and presentation is everything: "he is" must be endlessly complicated by "as he is." The portrait is composed of all that is typically lost in representation. It is made of transitive relations and expresses the contingency in viewing and the expressive dimension in language that dissolves when we look for a portrait subject. It is not a likeness of Picasso but a depiction of what such

a likeness would require, and this accounts for its difficulty, its obdurate quality, and also its lightness, the unmistakable insouciance of its tone. Stein is pleased to uncover the activity of exactitude, to extract the word "act" from "ex*act*": "Now actively repeat at all, now actively repeat at all, now actively repeat at all" (464). The artist is exacting; this is, after all, how the portrait is formed, extracting one word from another and exacting difference from repetition. Resemblance can never be exact.

Notes

1. Dydo, *The Language That Rises*, 71–2. Alice B. Toklas, *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*, 1954 (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1960), 97.
2. In a note on the Stein–Van Vechten correspondence, Edward Burns clarifies that Stein and Toklas first discovered Belley on this short visit in 1923, not the summer of 1924 as some sources, including an early biography, have erroneously recorded (Mellow, *Charmed Circle*, 313). Stein wrote a letter to Henry McBride from Belley postmarked September 8, 1923 where, according to Burns, she stayed "for a few days in September 1923 on her way to Nice to visit Picasso" in *Letters of GS and CVV*, Vol. 1, 108 n1. The following year, they spent their first full summer in Belley (Dydo, *The Language That Rises*, 70). Stimpson and Chessman, editors of *Gertrude Stein: Writings*, as well as Wanda M. Corn and Tirza True Latimer, editors of *Seeing Gertrude Stein: Five Stories*, document the 1923 visit to Belley. Sources claiming that Stein and Toklas first visited Belley in 1924 may be in error based on Stein's account in *ABT* 223, and that of Toklas in *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book,* 97. In their retrospective accounts, both Stein and Toklas seem to conflate the details of their first and second visits when they describe their excited first impressions of Belley and their decision not to continue on to visit Picasso. In 1923, after their first short stay in Belley, the couple did go on to visit Picasso on the Riviera. It was on their second visit the following year, that they did not and instead stayed on in Belley until their return to Paris in October. Stein's letters promising and deferring their visit to Picasso are collected in *Pablo Picasso, Gertrude Stein: Correspondence*, ed. Laurence Madeline (Seagull Books: New York, 2008), 281–290.

3. Burns, *Letters of GS and CVV,* Vol. 1, 89. From a letter to Van Vechten postmarked September 26, 1923 it is evident that Stein and Toklas extended their stay beyond their original intention. Dydo documents that the couple returned to Paris in late November in *The Language That Rises*, 72 n26.
4. Dydo, *The Language That Rises*, 74.
5. Wendy Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance*, 106.
6. Ibid., 105–6.
7. Ibid., 174.
8. See, for example, the portraits "Emily Chadbourne" in *UK* and "Jo Davidson" in *P&P.*
9. Burns discovered the first of the second portraits of Van Vechten in Stein's manuscript in 1984, and published the portrait and his commentary in *The Letters of GS and CVV*, Vol. 2, 857–66. My discussion of the portrait draws on his record and commentary.
10. Stein, letter postmarked March 20, 1923, in Burns, *Letters of GS and CVV*, Vol. 1,70.
11. Burns, *Letters of GS and CVV*, Vol. 2, 865.
12. Wallace Stevens, "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven," *The Collected Poems* (New York: Random House, 1982), 486.
13. Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance*, 93–4.
14. Ibid., 65.
15. Ibid., 106.
16. Quoted in Dydo's headnote, *SR* 449.
17. See Steiner's discussion of this portrait in *Exact Resemblance*, 110–116. Dydo adds that this *cahier* was one in a series of *Les Educateurs de la Jeunesse*, *The Language That Rises*, 37.
18. Burns, *Letters of GS and CVV*, Vol. 1, 103 n1.
19. Gioia Diliberto, *Hadley* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1992), 150.
20. Publication of the long novel proved to be a bigger undertaking than Ford had anticipated. Serialization in the journal began in April 1924 and ceased in December of that year, *Transatlantic Review* 1, nos. 4–6 (April 1924); 2, nos. 1–6 (December 1924). Stein was paid thirty francs per printed page. See Gallup, ed. *The Flowers of Friendship: Letters Written to Gertrude Stein* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 159 and 163–67; and Burns, *Letters of GS and CVV*, 95 n1.
21. Burns, *Letters of GS and CVV*, Vol. 1, 82.

22. Bruce Kellner, ed. *A Gertrude Stein Companion: content with the example* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1988), 278–281.
23. Burns, *Letters of GS and CVV*, Vol. 2, 863.
24. Ibid., 860.
25. Ibid., Vol. 1, 86–7.
26. Ibid., Vol. 2, 864–5.
27. Ibid., 865.
28. Audio files recorded in the winter 1934–35 during Stein's U.S. tour can be accessed through http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Stein/If-I-Told-Him.php. Accessed 6/1/16. Stein included "If I Told Him A Completed Portrait Of Picasso" in *Dix Portraits* (1930), translated into French by George Hugnet with Virgil Thomson, and later published in *P&P*.
29. Robert Chodat, "Sense, Science, and the Interpretations of Gertrude Stein," *Modernism/modernity*, 12, no. 4 (November 2005): 585.
30. In a telegram to Picasso dated September 11, 1923, Stein announced her arrival: "ARE IN NICE WILL FIND YOU ON THE BEACH WEDNESDAY PM UNLESS HEAR OTHERWISE LOVE TO EVERYBODY = GERTRUDE" *Pablo Picasso, Gertrude Stein: Correspondence*, 272. See Stein's account of this period "of not seeing each other" (from around 1919 to 1921) in *ABT* 193–94.
31. Wendy Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance,* 109; Dydo, *SR* 453 and *The Language That Rises,* 74; Steven Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation*, 315–6; Ulla Haselstein, "Gertrude Stein's Portraits of Matisse and Picasso," *New Literary History,* 34, no. 4 (2003): 737; Joan Retallack, ed. *Gertrude Stein: Selections* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 7.
32. Dydo, *The Language That Rises*, 74.
33. Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation*, 315.
34. Dydo dates the composition of "Picasso" to 1909 or 1910 in *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises,* 30. Years later, Stein made the comparison of Picasso and Napoleon in *ABT*: "Picasso was more than ever as Gertrude Stein said the little bullfighter followed by his squadron of four, or as later in her portrait of him, she called him, Napoleon followed by his four enormous grenadiers," 58. As I argue, we want to discover what becomes of this comparison in the compositional experiment of the portrait.

35. Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance,* 107.
36. Ibid., 108.
37. Ibid, 109.
38. Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance,* 101. Henry Sayre has objected that in seeking to identify reference Steiner misses Stein's intent which is to "undermine the referential certainty of language" and to "re-present representation" in "The Artist's Model: American Art and the Question of Looking like Gertrude Stein," *Gertrude Stein and the Making of Literature*, ed. Shirley Neuman and Ira Nadel (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 24, 26.
39. Ulla Haselstein, "Gertrude Stein's Portraits of Matisse and Picasso," 724.
40. Ibid, 727. According to Haselstein, "If I Told Him" is a resemblance of Stein, a "self-portrait in the guise of a portrait," by turns a stammering and mocking deflation of her earlier admiration, a dramatization of her competitive resentment of Picasso who always "came first," and a "playful exorcism," 738.
41. Rosalind Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1985), 32. Krauss charged William Rubin with introducing the "Autobiographical Picasso," the critical tendency to reduce Picasso's style to biography, neglecting transpersonal aspects of style. The impetus for Krauss's critique was Rubin's discussion in a 1980 lecture of Picasso's *Seated Bather* (1930) and *Bather with Beach Ball* (1932), paintings he claimed were distinctive in style and whose style was determined by Picasso's response to their subjects, his wife, Olga, and his young lover, Marie-Thérèse Walter. In "Reflections on Picasso and Portraiture," a later essay, Rubin qualifies but ultimately reiterates his claim: "The formal inventions which made possible the metaphoric languages of these two canvases cannot be attributed to the 'influence' of either Olga or Marie-Thérèse; however, the differing formal vocabularies of the paintings clearly reflect Picasso's responses to the characters of their 'models,'" *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation*, exhibition catalogue, ed. William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 66. Indeed, although Rubin claims that in Picasso's "conceptual" portraiture, metaphorical associations to an individ-

ual subject fade as the "morphology" is redeployed and its "contingency" is revealed, nonetheless for each development in painting style, Rubin identifies portrait subjects and biographical references and reduces the expressive dimension of associations to representation. Krauss's objection to art history practiced as "a history of the proper name" is that it limits the proper name to extension only (its meaning constrained to denotation) rather than also considering intension, that is, connotation and conceptual status that broadens its association to a "plurality of instances," 25 and 27. Krauss finds this approach to Picasso's work especially egregious insofar as his collages contest such "semantic positivism" and demonstrate "command of the structure of signification: no positive sign without the eclipse or negation of its material referent," 34. Historical or personal detail is deployed in a complex interrogation of the structures of *re*presentation, and therefore Krauss's analysis is particularly apt for Stein's portrait which, as I argue, playfully acts *On the Name of Picasso*. T.J. Clark dismisses the tendency to biographical reductionism ("biography is banality or speculation") in *Picasso and Truth: From Cubism to Guernica* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 172. This is the publication based on the A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts Clark gave at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in 2009.

42. For examples of the Cubist analogy in Stein criticism, see Charles Altieri, *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry*, 241–7; Marjorie Perloff, "Poetry as Word-System: The Art of Gertrude Stein" in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 67–109; Wendy Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance*.
43. Marjorie Perloff, "After Language Poetry: Innovation and Its Theoretical Discontents," *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 164. In a more recent article, "'A Cessation of Resemblances': Stein, Duchamp, Picasso," Perloff argues that Duchamp's work may be an even better visual analogy to Stein's method than Cubism. Originally published in *Battersea Review* 1, 1 (2012). http://marjorieperloff.com/essays/a-cessation-of-resemblances-stein-duchamp-picasso/. Accessed 6/1/16.
44. Brian Reed questions the reference to Paul Revere's warning signal: "why interject such a strange trivial aside into the portrait of an influential avant-garde artist? But who cares?" in "Now Not Now:

Gertrude Stein Speaks," *ESC* 33, no. 4 (December 2007): 103–113.

45. T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*: *Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 221.
46. Steiner, 108. Dydo notes that "Geography" (1923), which Stein wrote in the same *carnet* as "If I Told Him," also includes reference to Napoleon, *The Language That Rises*, 72.
47. Christopher Green, *Juan Gris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 52.
48. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 170.
49. Green, 52.
50. James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 2, 88.
51. The full title of the article is "A Portrait of Jo Davidson/An American Revolutionary of Prose Sets Down Her Impressions of an American Sculptor," in *Vanity Fair* 19, no. 6 (February 1923): 48 and 90. Although it is signed, "By Gertrude Stein," evidently this attribution refers to Stein's text, "A Portrait Of Jo Davidson," which appears after a short, unsigned, introduction of "Miss Gertrude Stein, an American now living in Paris" and the method of her "literary experiment" by analogy to "the new school of French painters," 48. The article includes three illustrations of portraits: Man Ray's photograph, "Gertrude Stein Posing for Jo Davidson," Jacques Lipchitz's bust of Stein, and Picasso's *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*. I agree with Edward Burns who ascribes the title "An American Revolutionary of Prose Sets Down Her Impressions of an American Sculptor" to the "unsigned article" in *Letters of GS and CVV*, Vol. 1, 94, n 5. That she should be regarded as a "Revolutionary of Prose" coincided with Stein's own estimation of herself. In a 1929 letter to Henry McBride, she wrote "and anyway what am I, I am an American, Alice says a civil war general in retirement, perhaps." Quoted in Bridgman, *Gertrude Stein in Pieces,* 209 and repeated in *ABT* 16.
52. Quoted in Clark, 205.
53. Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank,* 47–8.
54. Green, *Juan Gris*, 63. In 1921 Stein and Toklas visited Gris in Bandol, a seaside town on the Mediterranean coast, where he was painting a series of open window paintings. On their return to Paris, Stein and Toklas purchased one of these paintings, *The Table in Front of the Window,* from Kahnweiler. In *The Steins Collect:*

Matisse, Picasso, and the Parisian Avant-Garde, ed. Janet Bishop, Cécile Debray, and Rebecca Rabinow (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in association with New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 293.

55. Green, 62.
56. Madeline, 264. Based on a April 1923 letter, Robert McD.Parker suggests that *Calligraphic Still Life* may be the "new Picasso" that Stein mentions acquiring by trading older Picasso paintings. In "Catalogue of the Stein Collections," *The Steins Collect*, 434.
57. Quoted in Pepe Karmel, *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism*, 19.
58. Although Steven Meyer notes that the portrait "rearrange[s]" Picasso's name, he reinstates the question of resemblance: "Hence the portrait is riddled with plays on Picasso's name, beginning with the inquiry concerning the extent to which his name and person can be compared with Napoleon's," *Irresistible Dictation*, 315.
59. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "as." http://dictionary.oed.com. Accessed 6/1/16.
60. Stein, *Letters of GS and CVV*, Vol. 1, 88.
61. Clark, 219.
62. Ibid., 191.
63. Krauss, 34.
64. Karmel, 69.
65. Clark, 211.
66. Karmel, 76.
67. Ibid., 55.
68. Ibid., 83.
69. Clark, 175.
70. Ibid., 219 and 221.
71. Karmel, 87.
72. Clark, 204–5.
73. Karmel, 185–191.
74. Neil Cox, *Cubism* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), 268–71.
75. Karmel, 185.
76. Clark, 220–21.
77. Ibid., 212.
78. Ibid., 213.
79. Ibid., 221.

CONCLUSION

Relating Chance and Choice: *A Book Concluding With As A Wife Has A Cow A Love Story* (1923)

I want to close with a discussion of the second portrait Stein wrote of Alice Toklas, *A Book Concluding With As A Wife Has A Cow A Love Story*. We can read this portrait (we are *prepared* to read it, as Stein might say) with awareness of the questions that emerged in the sequence of landscape writing, now directed to this very charged text, the portrait of her beloved. These are questions concerning the representation of emotion and memory, as well as the relation of writing to things seen and to experience. Using the landscape homology to evoke presentational force in the text either as a formation or as ceaseless flux, Stein found that the resulting impressions of time and movement could be mined for the experiment at hand in plays, poems, anti-narratives, and portraits. As I have claimed, the compositional task of these years, "the problem of time in relation to emotion," was a problem of love poetry before it was the "problem with plays." With the second portrait of Toklas, we come full circle and find that Stein uses the discoveries she made in the landscape plays and intervening texts to suit the compositional task of writing a portrait of her beloved. After fifteen years of intimacy, how would she write a second portrait of Toklas that does not rely on attributing characteristics or recounting a history of their relationship?

In the portrait, as she had in the landscape plays, Stein attempts to render a time sense of becoming that will convey not experiences, but the manner of experiencing, of events transpiring, and of making choices,

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L. Voris, *The Composition of Sense in Gertrude Stein's Landscape Writing*,
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including choosing a stance toward chance. And, as I have argued, this change in the time sense conveyed through compositional relations made it impossible for Stein to proceed as if knowledge were static, incremental, or hierarchical. Instead, the compositional method of the portrait accords with the epistemology that Stein discovers through her landscape experiments, namely that knowing is constituted through an expressive dimension of language in which attribution is perpetually shaping relations but never fixing determination. In place of biographical material, the context for the portrait is the adjoining experiments in landscape writing. Reading this portrait of Toklas through the lens of Stein's sustained experiment with landscape means basing interpretation on a compositional approach, with an understanding of the compositional problem the text participates in and an understanding of Stein's epistemology. We can appreciate the complexity (and hilarity) of the challenge Stein set herself once we recognize that she has modeled the portrait on the experience of orgasm (*As A Wife Has A Cow*).

The portrait is one of several second portraits that Stein wrote in Nice where she and Alice stayed on until the end of November 1923. Matisse, with whom Stein was no longer friendly and whom she did not visit, was also in the area painting.[1] As aforementioned, during their stay Stein and Toklas visited Juan Gris who was in Monte Carlo working on stage sets and costumes for Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* productions.[2] Stein was once again living in proximity to the painters whose work she had found invigorating before WWI, painters who were energetically working. Gris and Stein were only recently reconciled: in 1921 they had patched up a prior quarrel and resumed a warm friendship until the painter's death in 1926. On their visits to Monte Carlo, perhaps Stein discussed the possibility that Gris would contribute illustrations for a publication of her second portrait of Toklas.[3] There are hints in the text that the two friends discussed Gris's work. Stein makes allusions to painting, but more intriguing is the fable-like quality of *A Book*, which suggests that Gris may have recounted the stories of the operas he was working on to Stein. The libretto of *La Colombe* (The Dove), an opera for which Gris designed sets and costumes, is based on a touching fable by La Fontaine. Discussing set designs and other production decisions with Gris would have coincided with Stein's continuing interest in the composition of figure and ground. "It is mostly done [the 'scene painting'] by an Englishwoman who does it as if she were a lady gardener. He seems pleased" Stein wrote to Van Vechten[4] In a letter to Kahnweiler after the festival, Gris confessed that although the

Montéclair ballet in particular was a "great success," he had found the collaboration with the *Ballets Russes* trying and exhausting: "I cannot wait to get away from this infuriating milieu."[5]

For Stein, by contrast, the extended stay in Nice was a tranquil time and resulted in great productivity. In its style the second portrait of Toklas is clearly linked to the foregoing experiments. It is composed of two distinct sections: the first is episodic and uses subheadings as she had in "An Elucidation," while the concluding section, "As A Wife Has A Cow," is written with the dense iteration of monosyllabic words characteristic of the second portraits. Under the subheading "Places," we find phrasing concerning "places" that links this text to the series of landscape writing. "How many places are there in it," Stein asks (SR 458). A passage from the concluding section reprises the difficult style of "Subject-Cases" by elaborating the infinitive "to prepare" with the shifting effects of modality:

> And prepare and prepare so prepare to prepare and prepare to prepare and prepare so as to prepare, so to prepare and prepare to prepare to prepare for and to prepare for it to prepare, to prepare for it, in preparation, as preparation in preparation by preparation. (462)

That the portrait concludes with passages in this disarming style may explain why it has not received the critical attention it merits. As I hope to show, the second portrait of Toklas is an appealing but challenging text. Like her second portrait of Picasso, it does not represent its subject in a conventional way, and we must determine how to relate the first and second sections which are entirely different in style. To interpret the portrait, we will need to understand the compositional question Stein addresses with the method of the text, including the kind of indetermination she establishes by means of such stammering passages as these.

Stein wrote the first section of *A Book* by prompting herself with a heading or subtitle and writing a short entry for the word or phrase. According to Dydo, Stein wrote each entry individually on the pages of a loose-leaf pad.[6] In the Galerie Simon edition published by Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler in 1926, typically five or six entries fill a printed page, depending on their length. The range of the subheadings is remarkable, and includes objects, instructions, attitudes, abstract nouns, figures of speech, and proper names. In the entries there are things and the setting for things typically found in realist fiction, including persons, places, interiors, visits, decisions, and "Suspicions" (458). To a remarkable extent, this section con-

veys a palpable sense of intimacy through its quotidian details, including mention of small pleasures, the need to broach agreements or to make decisions, the iteration of what was said (or not), along with preparations and choices. These elements are suggestive of potential connections, but no coherent narrative emerges. As she had in the preceding experiments with the forms of narrative and explanation, Stein flattens framing devices that contribute to illusion. Subheadings that suggest temporal markers, such as "Much Later," or "A Little Beginning," or "Introduction," fail to establish chronology and are the equivalent in the text of the subheadings "Fish," "A Hat," or "A Wish."

While it is impossible to read from one entry to another without forming associations, the text is episodic and the connections are tenuous. In a curious way, however, the text does impart a sense of continuity, and it is partly this aspect of the text, I think, that makes this section so very pleasing. And yet Stein does not convey this impression of continuity in any of the forms one would expect by either building associations, developing characters, or plotting action. Each subheading begs the question of its relation to its entry and to the preceding subheadings. The use of subheadings conveys the impulse to put things in place, in order, or in relation that the text does not actually fulfill. When the impulse to order is played against the spontaneity of the entries (in which it seems any element whatsoever may be included), the result is to create tension between these opposed tendencies: ordering and exceeding limits, or preparedness and chance. Once we recognize this tendency, we can see that Stein initiated this kind of opposition in the opening lines of the text. She begins the portrait with a metonym for the impulse to prepare and to safeguard before she launches the splintering action of the lively entries.

> Key To Closet.
>
> There is a key.
> There is a key to a closet that opens the drawer. And she keeps both so that neither money nor candy will go suddenly. (454)

By sustaining the tension between the opposed impulses to put things in order and to scatter, Stein evokes the impression of continuity or the wish to establish continuity without actually delivering narrative continuity. Instead, *A Book* tests the kind and extent of cohesion necessary to convey the impression of a shared world without telling a story.

This is cohesion sorely tried by the formal structure of the portrait which joins together two dissimilar sections. The title of the portrait, *A Book Concluding With As A Wife Has A Cow A Love Story*, suggests that the *As A Wife Has A Cow* section is somehow the conclusion to the *Book* section or to the portrait overall. What is the relation of the two sections of the portrait, and why are they so markedly different in style? The second section of the portrait strips away the vivid detail of the first and instead develops by modifying verbs (to be/made/can/come/expect/prepare) in abstract and dense passages. Nonetheless, the sections are linked in a way that gives us insight into the compositional task at hand. The concluding passage of *As A Wife Has A Cow* that begins "[h]ave it as having having it as happening" (462), is in fact a stammering elaboration of "Happen To Have" (454), one of the first subheadings of the first section, and the reiteration of the phrase links the two sections of the portrait. This subheading, "Happen to Have," is not a bad depiction of the first section of the text in which the episodic entries introduce many varied instances of happenstance.

When she repeats and modifies the phrase in the concluding passage, Stein reveals that the compositional task of the portrait is to transform happenstance into "Have it as happening." Rather than a story concerning the accidents of fate ("Happen to have"), what the text portrays is the ceaseless activity of choosing *what happens*. Far from a record of particular experiences, the text is an effort to adopt a stance that transforms whatever happens or what one "happens to have" into the manner or modality, "Have it as happening." This is a particular philosophical stance to chance that results from Stein's radical empiricism. Choices are not *made* in a way that eradicates chance or further choices. What has happened to Toklas or in their shared experience is not at issue, and Stein instead attempts through the method of the second section to convey the time sense of immediate experience suspended with the fullness of its contingency, "as happening." In the echoes of the word "happiness" in the concluding passage, we see that she associates the possibility of such accord with happiness and with orgasm.[7]

> Have it as having having it as happening, happening to have it as having, having to have it as happening. Happening and have it as happening and having it happen as happening and having to have it happen as happening, and my wife has a cow as now, my wife having a cow as now, my wife having

> a cow as now and having a cow as now and having a cow and having a cow now, my wife has a cow and now. My wife has a cow. (462)

While it is the case that in some Steinian texts "a cow" refers to orgasm, in this portrait we are prevented from reading the mention of orgasm thematically because in context the phrasing "as my wife has a cow" refers to the method of the portrait and the wish to "have it as happening."[8] The "it" of the passage pertains to whatever is "happening," and the portrait method. It is therefore an instructive, rather than descriptive passage: *A Love Story* is to be written "As a wife has a cow." This section of the portrait establishes the comparison in its opening lines:

> Nearly all of it to be as a wife has a cow, a love story. All of it to be as a wife has a cow, all of it to be as a wife has a cow, a love story. (460)

In order to understand what it can mean for orgasm to serve as a formal analogy for the portrait method, we will need to examine the portrait structure in greater detail, in particular the experiments with framing by which Stein evokes the impression of coherence. As I have suggested, various aspects in the text contribute to the sense of cohesion and continuity. Certainly one unifying element of the first section is the fanciful or fable-like quality I have already mentioned. The portrait begins with a key and a locked enclosure reminiscent of fairy tales, "There is a key to a closet that opens the drawer" (454). Perhaps Stein is aware that in exploring the relation of chance and choice, she dips into the fairy-tale genre where the consequences of both are much exaggerated. About midway through the first section, there is a scene that appears to be metonymic for lovemaking composed from the names "Hansel and Gretel."[9]

> Hands And Grateful.
> Hands and grateful. This does enjoying this. Hands and grateful very grateful. Go upstairs go upstairs go upstairs go. Hands and grateful. (458)

As I have mentioned, it seems likely that on their visits, Gris recounted the fable of La Fontaine that was the basis for Diaghilev's production, *La Colombe*. The fables of La Fontaine had coincided for Stein with portraiture years earlier. In *The Autobiography Of Alice B. Toklas*, Stein recounts that when Picasso painted her portrait in 1906, his mistress, Fernande Olivier, "offered to read La Fontaine's stories aloud to amuse Gertrude Stein while Gertrude Stein posed" (*ABT* 46).

If indeed memory was stirred, the biographical references or contexts are complicated by method, and Stein's strategies here consist in yet another experiment with framing devices. She puts storytelling itself on view by evoking the fable, and by exploiting the theatricality of this genre—its dramatization of the consequences of chance and choice. As she had in her earlier portrait of Toklas, clearly Stein continues to associate storytelling with intimacy. "Ada" (1910), her first portrait of Toklas, is a story of storytelling, where intimacy is revealed to be the reciprocity of "completely telling stories" and "completely listening" (*SR* 103).[10] While there may be references to life with Toklas in *A Book* (October 15, a date included without explanation in the text, is the feast day of St. Teresa of Avila whom Stein associated with Alice), references do not develop in conventional representation. Instead, in *A Book* Stein conveys the continuity of a shared life without storytelling and dispenses with the narrative perspective that offers summary in *Ada*: "She came to be happier than anybody else who was living then" (SR 102). Storytelling is now associated with intimacy in a far more complex manner, and the "love story" is somehow modeled on orgasm: "As a love story, as a wife has a cow, a love story" (461). There is no longer a story told by the lovers off-stage as it were—*A Book is* the story. Or, to put it in painterly terms, in the second portrait Stein successfully does away with a quality of "two-foldness," the impression of things discerned from their setting. To dissolve the illusion of frame, Stein carries over experiments of the landscape writing with framing devices in order to suggest both cohesion and openness. The lithographs Gris made for *A Book* correspond to this formal aspect of the portrait, and I want to discuss his method briefly as a visual analogy for the way that Stein frames the framing of storytelling.

Gris contributed lithographs to illustrate Kahnweiler's edition of *A Book*.[11] The lithographs are in the open window *motif* he began painting in 1915 and resumed in a series of paintings in 1921 while on a stay in Bandol on the Mediterranean coast.[12] That year Stein purchased one of these, *The Table in Front of the Window*, a warm composition in deep brown and ochre in which various objects, a pitcher, wineglass, pear, and newspaper, are jumbled on a table before an open window. The window is doubly framed, around one side and above by a theatrical-looking curtain and on the other side by the window shutter. Gris exhibited the open windows series he painted at Bandol and at Céret in a successful exhibition at Kahnweiler's gallery in April 1923. (The open window *motif* is a rare instance in which Gris anticipated Picasso, who painted a series of open

windows in the summer of 1919.) Clearly the open window *motif* dramatizes the commonplace association that a painting frames a view as does a window. By the time Gris made the lithographs for Stein's book in 1926, it is fair to say that the open window *motif* had become somewhat formulaic. Although they portray sentimental images, the lithographs suggest the compositional totality Gris accomplished to better effect in paintings of the early 1920s, and can serve to bring Stein's experiment with cohesive properties into focus.[13] According to art historian Christopher Green, the "aspiration to compositional cohesion" was a main ambition for Gris from the spring of 1916 until the end of 1922.[14] During this time, Gris experimented with the fusion of figure–ground and with various frames. The frame-within-a-frame technique of the open window paintings is an explicit signifier of compositional cohesion. The open window *motif*, Green writes, was "[Gris's] most compelling metaphor of a pictorial architecture that could contain things and yet be open."[15]

In yet another formal aspect, Gris's open window *motifs* must have appealed to Stein in her landscape period. "They are theatrical," Green concludes of the still lives Gris painted in 1920–22.

> By this I do not mean that their objects evoke the theatre or theatrical characters, I mean that the use of internal framing devices, most obviously the open window, and the scaling of objects together with their positioning on the table-tops within their "frames" is often manifestly stage-like. The curtains drawn back to display the objects and the landscape back-drops of *The Table in Front of the Window* [1921], *The Bay* [1921] and *Open Window with Hills* [1923] makes the analogy with the proscenium stage almost explicit. Like Gris's Harlequins and Pierrots, his still-lives after 1920 can often be seen as highly conventionalized pictorial dramas frozen into the immobility of *tableaux*, where the characters are objects and the *dramatis personae* are restricted to a few, easily recognised character-types established by tradition.[16]

Green's claims concerning the theatricality of the open window *motif* are borne out by one of Gris's set designs for Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*.[17] Gris designed the sets and costumes for *La Colombe (The Dove)*, a one-act Opéra comique to music by Charles Gounod (1818–93), arranged by Henri Poulenc. Little remains to document this opera except a painted cardboard model for the set design once owned by Maurice Raynal and since lost.[18] His set design for this opera was essentially an open window painting writ large: the set depicts the interior of a salon with a large standing clock at one corner and a chandelier suspended from the ceiling. At the

back of the room large windows open onto a view of a simple landscape—a triangular mountain and a single cypress tree. The open window of the set design frames an exterior view while it is itself framed by the theater set with its curtain parted to reveal the salon exterior. With playfulness and wit, Gris uses the set design to display the theatricality implicit in the open window *motif* in paintings that put the framing of a view itself on view.

I have made similar claims for the painterly analogy in Stein's formulation of landscape. Clearly the play as landscape involves analogy to landscape painting. When it implies or deploys proscenium effects, landscape painting is made to underscore its own artifice by suggesting theatrical artifice. This theatricality is exaggerated in Gris's use of the open window *motif:* it can be put to metaphoric uses, as Green suggests, and even function as a metaphor for cohesion itself. Exposing the illusion in representation, it becomes a self-reflexive property at one's disposal. Similarly, in *A Book*, Stein puts narrative framing devices on view, underscoring their artifice, and examines how she might create the impression of cohesion without fulfilling its premises. Typically, the open window in Gris's paintings doesn't create the impression of depth because the view through the window is coextensive with objects in the interior. Framing is what is on view. Likewise, in the first section of *A Book*, Stein fuses things and their settings, so that the subheadings do not frame a story. The text draws on stock phrasing for narrative, including "The great question is" (455), "It can be known" (456), "Even in the midst" (457), and "A long time in which to decide" (458). In addition, the text is full of declarations of intent including the subheadings "Decision" and "Choose" (455). These declarations that "he" has "decided" or "expected," or that "she" has "asked for," "changed," "needed," or "reminded," emerge without specifying outcome (passim). The reiteration of such stock phrases and declarations imparts effects associated with narrative, including the impression of continuity and of a coherent world, but without foreclosing any possibility since nothing is "decided" in a way that determines events. In some instances, the text following a subheading is humorous because it so neatly lays bare narrative expectation.

> Longer.
> She stayed away longer. (455)

Again and again Stein shows that she can shift abruptly from stock phrasing to vivid details that are fresh and unexpected. Evidently anything

may be included ("Elephants and birds of beauty and a gold-fish," 456) but what makes the text suggestive is Stein's ability to play such quirky detail against the register of narrative markers, these also treated humorously: "Quickly," "A Little Beginning," "Longer," and "Much later." Here is a sample page of the text.

> Ready.
>
> When I was as ready to like it as ever I was ready to account for the difference between and the flowers.
>
> Are you ready yet, not yet.
>
> Knives.
>
> Who painted knives first. Who painted knives first. Who said who painted knives first. Who said who painted knives first. And see the difference.
>
> Insisted.
>
> I insisted upon it in summer as well as in winter. I insisted upon it I insisted upon it in summer I insisted upon it in summer as well as in winter. To remember in winter that it is winter and in summer that it is summer. I insisted upon it in summer as well as in winter not sentimentally with raspberries.
>
> To Remind.
>
> She reminded me that I was as ready as not and I said I will not say that I preferred service to opposition. I will not say what or what is not a pleasure. (459)

Through her method, Stein reveals that we don't need more detail about the decisions made—the "it" that is insisted upon "in summer as well as in winter"—for the text to convey the impression of a particular world. The portrait is an exploration of how much framing, and what kind, is necessary to sustain the illusion of coherence while still conveying that the portrait, like memory and experience itself, is a construction open to future revision. That is, Stein attempts to make openness and the operations of chance structural components of the portrait rather than happenstance, a matter of content. By structural I mean that the relation between the oppositions suggested, including accident and preparedness, chance and choice, spontaneity and order, exceeding and containing, emerge as relative tensions rather than as themes. (Even to list these as oppositions is to paraphrase their dynamic relations in the portrait.)

This method has real epistemological consequences. To return to the visual analogy: as with the theatricality of Gris's open window painting, when Stein flattens the frame in the portrait she puts framing on view

as illusion. In Stein's portrait, this reveals the narrative continuity in the representation of intimacy to be a fiction, an illusion of representation. There is no reason that intimacy need be restricted to modes of representation informed by the chronological time sense of realist fiction and the logic of predication. Instead, Stein suggests that the portrait might be written *As A Wife Has A Cow*, merely by shifting from the expectation that a chronology of events is telling ("Happen to have") to a philosophical stance that aligns portraiture with the infinite horizon of the expressive dimension in language, regardless of particular decisions or events. "I insisted upon it in summer as well as in winter" (459). That is, with *A Book* we begin to appreciate the metaphor of the procedures at hand: such extreme reliance on modifiers and shifters might be a way to develop a "feeling as for *it*" (461, emphasis added). And why do that? A "feeling" for shifters in place of a focus on substantives, a feeling for textual events unfolding in exchangeable positions, directions, and relations, might prove to be a dynamic alternative to the static conventions of narrative and portraiture.

Let's examine the method. In the second section of *A Book*, Stein shifts abruptly from the light, episodic method of the first section to the dense monosyllabic style that this portrait shares with the second portraits of Picasso and Van Vechten. The use of nouns is sparing and verbs typically develop intratextual rather than descriptive action. Here is the second passage of the text following directly on the passage "Nearly all of it to be as a wife has a cow, a love story" I have quoted above:

> As to be all of it as to be a wife as a wife has a cow, a love story, all of it as to be all of it as a wife all of it as to be as a wife has a cow a love story, all of it as a wife has a cow as a wife has a cow a love story. (460)

The phrase "as to be" sets up an extended relation of the terms "wife," "cow," and the portrait ("a love story"), complicated by the shifting senses of the mercurial "as." Where "it" is the portrait, Stein is directive—the portrait is to be written "all of it as to be as a wife has a cow." At the same time, through the repetition, Stein reveals the word "as" in "has" and suggests that the possessive state might be modified by "as" to emphasize the manner of apprehension rather than to designate a singular event. Clearly, the "cow" does not refer to a singular climax or a climactic moment of the text, and the next passage forms through modification of the original proposition, "as a wife has a cow." The first move is simply to

shift from present tense to past: "Has made as to be as a wife has a cow a love story" (460). Subsequent passages bring to bear the effects of conjunctives ("and") combined with prepositions, including "in," "for," and "or." Here, for example, are the effects of "and" combined with "in" as modifiers in a passage alluding to the idiom, "Six of one, half a dozen of the other."

> And to in six and another. And to and in and six and another. And to and in and six and another. And to in six and and to and in and six and another. And to and in and six and another. And to and six and in and another and and to and six and another and and to and in and six and and to and six and in and another. (460)

Reading on, we find that subsequent passages test other conjunctions and prepositions. The extraordinary density of the passage results from the high concentration of words that ordinarily establish relation, including addition, inclusion, and number, together with relational parts of speech such as conjunctions, prepositions, and articles. This density reveals the differences in expression imparted by particular parts of speech and the effects of sequence. In the first sentence above, we detect both a sense of connection and directionality conveyed by "And to," spliced together with the placing action of the preposition "in," and followed by the sense of addition suggested by "and another." Subtle differences, perhaps, but this is the action at work in the passage. Variants suggesting addition are compounded by the potential for further additions of a different kind implied by the homonyms and numbers "And to" ["And two" or "And too"] and "six" as a measure of quantity. In subsequent sentences, the word "And" is followed alternately by "to," "in," "and," "another," "six." Stein explores the variable senses of the conjunction "and" depending upon the word that follows. We are meant to compare the differences between the phrase "and to" to that of "and in" to that of "and another," and so forth. Through this intricate parsing, we begin to see the word "other" in the word an*other*. A subsequent passage will test the differences in use between the words "or" and "for." If this seems excruciatingly painstaking or merely tedious, Stein's point in any case is clear and forceful. Declaring that she will write the portrait in the manner of "as a wife has a cow" she demonstrates through this meticulous attention to linguistic operations how difficult it is to "have" an event of this kind in the text. In order to make her alternative apparent, Stein has to establish the terms of her

resistance to conventional depiction—and make that resistance sufficiently felt. She does this by insisting that to "have" something occur in the text, "as happening" rather than as a report, depends on making manifest the expression of such subtle, fleeting differences that arise through an emphasis on conjunctive relations.

In place of description, the portrait expresses what James called "feelings of relation," the "overtone, halo or fringe" imparted by the particular phrasing of a thought.[19] In a well-known passage from his chapter on "The Stream of Thought," James claimed, "There is not a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some shading or other of relation which we at some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of our thought."[20] In her efforts to abstract a "feeling for it," Stein very nearly quotes James. About midway through the portrait she writes: "Feeling or for it, as feeling or for it, came in or come in, or come out of there or feeling as feeling or feeling as for it" (461). Compare this to James's injunction:

> We ought to say a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*, quite as readily as we say a feeling of *blue* or a feeling of *cold*.[21]

For James, were we to appreciate our "feelings of relation" we would know more about our thought process, both the "real relations" between objects of thought and the "inward coloring" of the stream of consciousness.[22] Focusing primarily on substantives we lose sight of how our thinking is structured, including the way that language use both derives from and informs our consciousness. James asks, "What is that shadowy scheme of the 'form' of an opera, play, or book, which remains in our mind and on which we pass judgment when the actual thing is done?"[23] I gather that Stein is using orgasm as analogy in much the same way, as "the actual thing" that imparts a trace of form. The portrait is an attempt at a composition that will reveal that form, absent content, or a particular object of thought. It suggests that if we were somehow able to follow the variable modality of demonstrative adverbs, the changing relations of shifters, the compounding or additions of conjunctions, the directionality implied by prepositions—all the subtle "feelings of relations" conveyed by grammar—we might then be able to conceive of a love story in which "having" depends upon the elusive manner of occurrence, "having it as happening."

This will require the unique time sense Stein developed through successive experiments with the landscape homology to convey both duration and immediacy. Stein defers completion, conclusion, arrival, or ending and instead suspends perpetual states of becoming by exploring the various relations among the terms she sets in motion. The effects are striking when the "feelings of relations" she evokes concern temporal relations, as we see in the several passages of the portrait modifying the word "now." An expanding set of distinctions ("just as soon as now" and "[j]ust as soon as that" and "even now and therefor") suspends the present moment—or perhaps endlessly defers its occurrence—between the poles of "now" and "even now" (461). The implications for "a love story" are obvious: "Even now, now and even now and now and even now" (461).

Clearly, Stein's second portraits of Picasso and Toklas are not efforts to summarize impressions or to characterize their subjects and, in frustrating our expectations these texts press us to explore the questions she poses concerning portraiture by means of their method. As I have suggested, because our expectations of representation in portraiture are so inured, perhaps the portraits even more than the plays and poetry challenge us to identify and engage Stein's experiment. To rephrase Gowing on Cézanne once again, we are not altogether accustomed to interpreting what a text expresses rather than what it represents.[24] I have attempted to model a compositional approach that: identifies the compositional task crossing and linking texts; questions how Stein frames the task and what she discovers; treats "composition as explanation," identifying the mode of explanation in each text; analyzes the terms of a text as elements of a composition such that their meaningfulness emerges (and shifts) in the ensuing compositional totality; resists conclusions and instead pushes on to successive texts of a series to examine how these complicate the experiment; and acknowledges that a particular line of critical inquiry is provisional and others are possible.

Reading in this way, we find Stein's discoveries startling in their epistemological implications. As discussed, the second portrait of Toklas reveals that when Stein attempts to express "have it as happening," adopting a stance that regards both experience and writing as unfolding processes, she renders chance and choice equivalent terms. Conventional portraiture typically records the outcome of choices. Instead, Stein's portrait proposes choosing chance and, in a radical empiricist stance, revaluing chance as a potency that enhances or expands the field rather than as an unwelcome derailment of will. This insight follows on her use of the landscape homol-

ogy to explore the concept of knowledge. For if one conceives of knowing as a space to hold open so that varied and multiple connections may form, one cannot know in advance which elements will configure the field: the field is forming. Knowing becomes an elastic and reversible activity, a matter of forming relations among elements, creating a frame or a series or grouping with the understanding that one can expand or alter the outcome simply by shifting the frame. In place of arresting motion, coming to a conclusion, or narrowing the field by moving from more differentiated to less differentiated states, this spatial model of knowledge entails ever widening the scope of relations possible. As we have seen, in practice, it means redoubling our reading to read for composition: elements that suggest particular meanings in a passage of the text may also participate in a developing series that in crossing the text composes it. As elements shift in operations their meanings also change. We will need to adapt our critical practice accordingly and relinquish questions that take the form, "what does Stein mean" or "what does the text mean," and instead ask how the text through its method expresses an interrogation of the very "grounds" for meaning. This is to relinquish the conditioning introduced by rationalism in our critical practice, that is, the implicit determination and containment involved as though we could cup water in our hands when all along we have been reading Stein for the exhilaration of water rushing through our fingers.

The remarkable irony in Stein's landscape writing is that, while we might expect a spatial homology to frame a view or, at minimum, impart stillness, Stein discovers and releases dynamic and intensive movement by playing out the paradoxes entailed in the homology. This accounts, I think, for the humor expressed in the many variations on the idiomatic expression "a place for everything" that recurs in texts of these years. As I have discussed, once place is no longer determinative, fixed, and therefore capable of displacing or ordering other elements, Stein finds that it is possible in the language of the text to realize that everything moves in relation without requiring a frame or background. Or, to word this as an insight concerning knowledge, that making sense transpires rather than arrives when all elements contribute equally as they enter into relations with other elements. Rather than fix a view, the landscape homology creates a moving prospect as qualities shape a continuously emerging space. Landscape is a stance that renders composition surveyable, an activity, rather than a place. As such, it throws illusion into relief. The theatricality of the landscape homology, its potential to frame framing or to stage stag-

ing, allows Stein to analyze the fictions conditioned by representation in narrative, love poetry, plays, and portraiture. What are the fictions of self, intimacy, and experience conditioned by story and by a representational theory of knowledge underlining narrative and explanation? I find that the visual analogy proves useful because Cézanne's painting and Cubism so starkly rupture academic conventions of recession, perspective, and figure–ground relations that we are pressed to examine how representational conventions have conditioned our expectations of art practice and of thought.

While some of Stein's writing of these years might be deemed sentimental, it is not nostalgic. Stein employs the immanence or presentational force she associated with landscape in pieces that would seem to draw on self-reflection or the processes of memory. As I have argued, she deploys the temporality she learns to express through her experiments with the landscape homology to impart a curious state of suspension, or duration that does not take time, and of a ceaseless becoming. This she achieves chiefly by deploying the action of conjunctive and disjunctive relations in language so that in reading these texts we must accustom ourselves to the unsettling finding that any idea expressed is almost immediately undone, reversed, or splintered into various, sometimes conflicting, possibilities. The emphasis on relations is destabilizing and disorienting if we want to paraphrase an explanation, summarize a portrayal or narrative, but exhilarating if we realize that with the stammering of language Stein releases the potential expression of infinitive states, "to relate" or "to know" or "to have." Much like Cézanne's color modulation, the "what happens" or the sense expressed in a Steinian text is a kind of rippling or shimmering of the surface. She thereby realizes and admits contingency as a potential force that we need not limit with existing notions of experience, because it is an event of language and, as such, makes new thinking possible.

Notes

1. Gris wrote to Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler on October 20, 1923, "Yesterday I was in Nice with Gertrude who kept us for dinner. I went to see Matisse to whom I had written in advance. He was very cold and could only spare us about half an hour on the pretext that he was working hard, etc. He won't do anything for Diaghilev because he says he loses money when he's not painting pictures. Altogether we didn't get on well. He wouldn't come and dine with

Gertrude and myself when I invited him on Gertrude's behalf." *Letters of Juan Gris* [1913–1927], collected by Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler; quoted in Burns, *Letters of GS and CVV,* Vol. 1, 92 n2. (Burns corrects the date of this letter which is incorrectly printed as 1932 in the *Letters of Juan Gris.*)

2. From October 1923 through early January of 1924, Gris worked in Monte Carlo on three productions of Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes.* In her essay "Music and Theatre in the Work of Juan Gris," Karin von Maur documents Gris's contribution to the *Ballets Russes, Juan Gris*, 267–282.
3. Although Gris did not read English, Dydo speculates that Stein may have discussed the portrait with him when she wrote it, *SR* 452.
4. Burns, *Letters of GS and CVV,* Vol. 1, 91.
5. Quoted by von Maur in *Juan Gris*, 277.
6. Dydo, headnote, *SR* 452.
7. Kay Turner concludes that the word "cow" in this passage among others has a "double meaning" on the basis of a collection of undated love notes written by Stein and Toklas and inadvertently included among the Stein manuscripts, *carnets*, and correspondence that Toklas sent to Yale University Library in 1947 after Stein's death. When these stray notes were discovered, Toklas initially insisted that they be destroyed and later requested that they not be made publicly available. According to Turner, the notes were catalogued for inclusion in the Stein-Toklas Papers in the YCAL under the title "Autrerespondence" in 1995. See Turner, *Baby Precious Always Shines, Selected Love Notes Between Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). Left for Alice to find in various places in the house or in the manuscript she was then typing, some of Stein's notes are charming, and many others are examples of the trite, sentimental kind that only the intended recipient can admire. Turner concludes that the notes "demonstrate unequivocally" that "cows are Toklas's feces or stools," revealing an erotically charged interest in her lover's bowel movements on the part of Stein. In the private realm of the love notes, the word "cow" may indeed have this reference in some notes, while in many texts, it seems to refer to sex. As I have argued throughout, in Stein's work words derive their sense from context as elements in the overall composition. If the word "cow" refers to

excrement or defecation in some of the love notes, we have no license to assert that this is a fixed meaning (the "evidence" that Turner supposes) and that the word will have the same meaning in a text intended for publication. This would be to treat the word as though it were part of a code; this kind of approach, uncovering a code for sexuality or biographical references in the work, tends to restrict interpretation to biographical implications, foreclosing thereby the very inquiries about the nature of sexuality, intimacy, and identity that a work such as *As A Wife Has A Cow* investigates. Turner, for example, proposes that the collections of love notes "inscribe the innermost reality of the [Stein-Toklas] marriage," 4. As I propose, the text of Stein's second portrait of Toklas suggests that in intimacy, as in the operations of memory, there is no singular, fixed "reality," only a constantly changing construction. See also Charles Bernstein's caution against treating Stein's work as a code or "pre-symbolic language" in "Professing Stein/Stein Professing," in *A Poetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 142–149.

8. In his reading of "Lifting Belly," Quartermain suggests that referentiality is complicated in Stein's method, such that "words like 'caesar' and 'cow' become charged but impossible to fix, even if we happen to know the code. It may be, indeed, that knowledge of the code is actually a hindrance to our reading of the text, for it narrows the multiplicity of transformations," *Disjunctive Poetics*, 32.
9. Of this sequence, Dydo writes "The closet opens to a fairy-tale double entendre" in the headnote, *SR* 452.
10. Dydo likens the first and second portraits of Toklas on this basis in her headnote, "Even in the first portrait *Ada*, the two figures, like lovers everywhere, never tire of telling and listening to love stories" *SR* 451.
11. Dydo, *SR* 452.
12. Painted in June 1915, *Still-life and Townscape, Place Ravignan* (Philadelphia Museum of Art) Gris's first open window painting is "one of his most ambitious and best known paintings," Green, 63.
13. Something Else Press reissued *A Book Concluding With As A Wife Has A Cow* with facsimiles of Gris's lithographs and a reproduction of the original edition statement page (West Glover, Vermont: Something Else Press, 1973).

14. Green, *Juan Gris*, 60.
15. Ibid., 62.
16. Ibid., 156.
17. See von Maur's account of Gris' contribution to the *Ballets Russes* in Green, 267–282.
18. For an illustration of the set, see von Maur in Green, 278. Maur finds the "interleaving [of] interior and exterior space" of the set reminiscent of Picasso's sets for the 1920 ballet *Pulcinella*, performed at the Paris Opera.
19. James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 1, 281. James inveighs against reducing the complexity of thought to a "substantive kernel," and insists that "to *feel* that idiosyncrasy we must reproduce the thought as it was uttered, with every word fringed and the whole sentence bathed in that original halo of obscure relations, which, like an horizon, then spread about its meaning," 275–6.
20. Ibid., 245.
21. Ibid., 245–6.
22. Ibid., 245.
23. Ibid., 255.
24. Gowing, "The Logic of Organized Sensations," 66.

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